

THE HUMANITY COALITION: BRINGING HUMANISTS AND RELIGIOUS  
ADHERENTS TOGETHER IN INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT

By

KATHLEEN A. GREEN

A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Submitted to  
New York Theological Seminary  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Old Lyme, Connecticut, USA

2018

Approved  
2/19/18  
for notation. Approved  
2/19/18

Copyright  
KATHLEEN A. GREEN  
2018



## Abstract

# THE HUMANITY COALITION: BRINGING HUMANISTS AND RELIGIOUS ADHERENTS TOGETHER IN INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT

By

KATHLEEN A. GREEN

As an interfaith advocate, Humanist, and Unitarian Universalist minister, I have observed that the philosophical tradition of Humanism is too often a missing voice in interfaith dialogue and action. Continuing to ignore this reality has the potential to further deepen the dangerous divide between people of religious and secular beliefs, and fails to capture the positive impact that collaboration can have on urgent social justice issues.

In this project I will raise awareness, in Connecticut, among Humanists and interfaith groups of the existence of each demographic, and will gauge the willingness both have to cooperate with each other. I will explore the trends in group membership and use of technology to build community, and examine the Humanist Manifesto for evidence of a call to cooperate with religious adherents. The result of the above actions in this project is the development of a Collaboration Vision Initiative that establishes the process utilized to bring Humanists and religious believers together. The project will demonstrate a shift in the interfaith landscape that calls for inclusion of Humanists in interfaith social justice engagement.

I dedicate this work to my husband, Mitchell, whose contagious sense of adventure and never-wavering support has buoyed, embraced, and inspired me in my ministry and throughout our years together.

## Acknowledgments

Thank you to my family for expressing their confidence in my capabilities when I struggled to believe in myself. Their support was invaluable.

Thank you to my Site Team for their encouragement, feedback, and patience. Their wisdom was motivating.

Thank you to NYTS for their acceptance of me as a non-theist student. Their respect and compassion were laudable.

Thank you to all of the Humanists and religious adherents willing to be a part of my project and willing to seriously consider a more inclusive interfaith movement for the future. Their courage and commitment were inspiring.

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 SETTING.....	1
CHAPTER 2 POT HOLE .....	10
DANGEROUS STEREOTYPING .....	11
FINDING COMMON LANGUAGE.....	13
WORTHY OF ATTENTION.....	16
CONTINUING CHALLENGES.....	17
CHAPTER 3 AWARENESS.....	20
RAISING AWARENESS AMONG HUMANISTS.....	22
RAISING AWARENESS AMONG INTERFAITH GROUPS.....	25
THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH.....	27
ECUMENIST COMPETENCY .....	36
CHAPTER 4 RELATIONSHIP.....	42
PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH.....	44
FAITH-ROOTED COMMUNITY ORGANIZER COMPETENCY .....	52
VALUES, NOT BELIEFS .....	56
CHAPTER 5 PLAN.....	60
TEAMWORK DOES MAKES THE DREAM WORK .....	62
SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH .....	65
PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY .....	70
THE COLLABORATIVE VISION INITIATIVE COMES TO LIFE .....	72
CHAPTER 6 CELEBRATION.....	77
UNVEILING THE PLAN.....	79
PHASE II.....	81
CHAPTER 7 EVALUATION .....	86
CHAPTER 8 COMPETENCIES .....	93
FINAL THOUGHTS .....	98
APPENDICES .....	101
APPENDIX A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL .....	102

APPENDIX B PRE-SURVEYS.....	141
APPENDIX C POST-SURVEY .....	143
APPENDIX D SURVEY DATA CHART.....	145
APPENDIX E COLLABORATION VISION INITIATIVE.....	147
APPENDIX F WEBINAR INVITATION .....	151
APPENDIX G CLU BLOG POST.....	152
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	154

### List of Figures

Figure 1. Humanist Symbols.....	5
Figure 2. Interfaith Social Issues .....	23

## CHAPTER 1 SETTING

*Ministry is all that we do—Together. Ministry is that quality of being in community that affirms human dignity—beckons forth hidden possibilities, invites us into deeper, more constant, reverent relationships, and carries forward our heritage of hope and liberation.*

*Ministry is what we do together as we celebrate triumphs of our human spirit, miracles of birth and life, wonders of devotion and sacrifice.*

*Ministry is what we do together—with one another—in terror and torment—in grief, in misery and pain, enabling us in the presence of death to say yes to life. We who minister speak and live the best we know with full knowledge that it is never quite enough...And yet are reassured by lostness found, fragments reunited, wounds healed, and joy shared. Ministry is what we all do—*

*together.*  
— Gordon McKeeman, Unitarian Universalist minister

### **The Context**

I am a firm believer in the words of Gordon McKeeman: Ministry is all that we do together. While his words were spoken at my ordination service in January, 2007, and have served as a reminder since that date of my call to serve humanity through the vehicle of professional ministry, the concept of “together” has expanded greatly. Today, I seek ministry that goes beyond Unitarian Universalist congregations, beyond religious organizations, and beyond what is thought of as traditional ministry. Ministry is all that we do together and it is what we all do together - humanist and religious. The Humanity Coalition project focuses on Connecticut’s interfaith and Humanist communities with their plethora of diverse people, faiths, and philosophical perspectives.

It was surprising to learn that Connecticut is the third most religiously diverse state in the country.<sup>1</sup> This fact makes Connecticut a very interesting setting for The Humanity Coalition project. The caveat to its diversity is that precise and accurate published data on the number of interfaith and Humanist groups is difficult to find. What I found in Connecticut is similar to what I found in interfaith circles across the country: many groups are limited to religious leaders and some groups are at best ecumenical and not truly interfaith. I did not want to exclude groups limited to religious leaders but I was not willing to include ecumenical groups. In choosing to identify only what I considered “vibrant” interfaith and Humanist groups for my research, I was able to gather the data needed by using two simple criteria: 1. The group must meet on a regular basis at least once a quarter, whether in person or online, and 2. The group must have no less than eight members participating on a regular basis.

In addition to the six vibrant Humanist groups and five vibrant interfaith groups I was able to identify, Hartford Seminary has a growing multifaith Doctorate of Ministry degree program, and there are fifteen active Unitarian Universalist congregations throughout the state.<sup>2</sup> As a Unitarian Universalist minister I know that the theological demographics of such congregations are typically quite diverse and include Humanists. Connecticut is a great research laboratory and setting for inclusive interfaith engagement.

It is important to note that 51% of Connecticut’s residents identify as religious, meaning they identify with a particular religion. According to the Pew Research Center,

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert P. Jones and Daniel Cox, “America’s Changing Religious Identity: Findings from the 2016 American Values Atlas,” Public Religion Research Institute, September 6, 2017, <https://www.prii.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/PRRI-Religion-Report.pdf> (accessed September 9, 2017)

<sup>2</sup> Unitarian Universalist Association, <http://www.uua.org> (accessed February 13, 2017).

just over 20% of adults in Connecticut are religious “Nones,” meaning they do not identify with a religion. Ten percent of Connecticut adults identify as atheist or agnostic, and 14% identify as “nothing in particular.”<sup>3</sup> What makes The Humanity Coalition unique is the intentional inclusion of Humanists who may come from the religious Nones, atheists, agnostics, or even those who have claimed their religious affiliation as “nothing in particular.” Those who claim their religious identity as none or nothing in particular may just be the most overlooked and underestimated demographic that interfaith leaders and organizations are failing to connect with.

The theological character of The Humanity Coalition is one of interconnectedness. It is a relational theology with interconnectedness defined as being mutually joined or related. Interconnectedness is found within the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism as a call to affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Interconnectedness is also found explicitly in Buddhism, and earth-centered religions such as Paganism with the word often interchanged with interdependence. In the specific arena of interfaith engagement, I think of interconnectedness and the call for respect of the interdependent web as found in the famous words “We need not think alike to love alike.” The words are often attributed to Francis David (c. 1520-1579), founder of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania, but in fact appear to come from Methodist founder, John Wesley.<sup>4</sup>

The future vision for The Humanity Coalition goes further than interfaith engagement and into pluralism. Pluralism is necessarily relational as it “only manifests

---

<sup>3</sup> Pew Center Research, “Religious Landscape Study”, 2016, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/connecticut/>.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Hughes, “Who Really Said That?” *UU World*, Fall, 2012, <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/uu-rumor-mill-produces-quotes>.



itself in the give and take of relationships between people of different religious and non-religious identities.”<sup>5</sup> The four points of pluralism explained by Harvard University’s Pluralism Project are as follows: 1. Pluralism is the energetic engagements with diversity. 2. Pluralism is not just tolerance, but the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference. 3. Pluralism is the encounter of commitments; holding our deepest differences in relationship to one another. 4. Pluralism is based on dialogue — both speaking and listening.<sup>6</sup> David Ray Griffin says that to be a religious pluralist is to “reject any a priori claim that their own religion is the only valid one.”<sup>7</sup> Griffin explores the features of Alfred Whitehead’s process philosophy that connect with pluralism. One of which is that assertions that may at first sight appear to be contradictory may actually express complementary truths, such as the clash between science and religions.<sup>8</sup> The ethical motivation behind religious pluralism begins with a rejection of assumed superiority and then moves to recognition that many of the world’s problems are so great that if they are to be overcome at all it will be done through the cooperation of the world’s religions. Along with a relational theology of interconnectedness and the vision of pluralism, it is shared values, as opposed to beliefs, that are paramount to the project.

If and when symbols are to be used to identify The Humanity Coalition, it may be a version of the well-known coexist bumper sticker, or a similar interfaith-type symbol

---

<sup>5</sup> Rachael McNeal, “Creating a Culture of Interfaith Cooperation,” *The Huffington Post*, April 27, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rachael-mcneal/creating-a-culture-of-unity-through-interfaith-cooperation\\_b\\_3167765.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rachael-mcneal/creating-a-culture-of-unity-through-interfaith-cooperation_b_3167765.html) (accessed May 20, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Diana L. Eck, “What is Pluralism,” The Pluralism Project, Harvard University, 2006,) <http://pluralism.org/what-is-pluralism> (accessed September 10, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: On Postmodernism, Morality, Pluralism, Eschatology, and Demonic Evil* (Anoka, MN: Process Century Press, 2017), 74.

<sup>8</sup> Griffin, 78.

that includes the Happy Human icon that has been adopted by the American Humanist Association, the British Humanist Association, the International Humanist and Ethical Union, and a host of other Humanist organizations.



**Figure 1. Humanist Symbols**

Eboo Patel, founder and president of Interfaith Youth Core, has described an interfaith leader as someone who works to help people who orient around religion differently to have a common life together.<sup>9</sup> As I increase my own capacity as an interfaith leader with this project, I seek to work alongside other leaders and transformational organizations that hold a wide vision for collaboration and who recognize the shifting landscape of interfaith engagement that goes beyond ecumenism and seeks to include minority religious and philosophical traditions. These leaders and organizations inspire my ministry and are a part of the “big picture” setting for this project.

The Interfaith Alliance is one example of a transformational organization that recognizes the interfaith shift. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., The Interfaith Alliance was created in 1994, “to celebrate religious freedom and to challenge the bigotry

---

<sup>9</sup> Eboo Patel, *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2016), 11.

and hatred arising from religious and political extremism infiltrating American politics.”<sup>10</sup>

To date, The Interfaith Alliance has members across the country from 75 faith traditions, as well as members who are not affiliated with any faith tradition, and an atheist serving on its Board of Directors. Currently, twenty-one Interfaith Alliance affiliate offices are located across the nation, although Connecticut does not have such an office. This is why, when I first imagined this doctoral project, I planned to open a Connecticut state affiliate of The Interfaith Alliance. The affiliate would either house The Humanity Coalition or would simply be named such.

I was asked by one of New York Theological Seminary’s professors why I thought it was necessary to work through another organization rather than develop the project organically and then consider working “with” established organizations instead of “for” them.<sup>11</sup> After continued discernment, and with that motivating question in mind, I came to see my call to the doctoral work moving in a different direction. That decision has precipitated a change in the project setting from one of an Interfaith Alliance affiliate office to one in which The Humanity Coalition will have the opportunity to live and grow and work according to the needs of the wider community, however that might be manifest.

In addition to the change from affiliate to collaboration, in the last year of my doctoral work I have taken the position of Executive Director of the Yale Humanist Community (YHC). YHC is a transformative humanist organization whose mission is to “provide a secular community at Yale, and in the greater New Haven area, where people

---

<sup>10</sup> Interfaith Alliance, “How We Make a Difference,” <https://interfaithalliance.org/about-us/> (accessed November 10, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Conversation during DMin classes at NYTS in October, 2016.

explore ethical values, find inspiration and meaning through connection, and serve others.”<sup>12</sup> The vision that YHC claims is a future where people are united by values rather than divided by beliefs. Combining a solid mission and powerful vision with the fact that YHC is recognized by the Yale chaplain’s office, has several Yale faculty members on its Advisory Board, and has the potential to reach nearly seven hundred undergrad students in 2018, who self-identify as humanist, atheist, agnostic, or religiously unaffiliated, feels promising.

YHC is located in New Haven, where just over 50% of the residents identify as non-religious. This is a 15% increase from a study done ten years previously. This data is significant in that YHC sees its mission as serving not only Yale, but residents of the greater New Haven area and currently has members from far beyond New Haven. YHC is a part of the setting for The Humanity Coalition based on my presence in the organization and the work inspired by the inclusive vision statement, such as bringing in speakers from various religious traditions and consistently encouraging an atmosphere of collaboration.

The transformative interfaith organization known as Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) also influences the project setting. The Chicago-based organization claims it is working to make interfaith cooperation the norm in America. College and university campuses are where IFYC works with leaders to “turn religious diversity into a positive force in our society.”<sup>13</sup> It was inspiring to learn of the religious identification shift within the organization’s alumni and leadership over the past decade. Twenty percent of the current

---

<sup>12</sup> Yale Humanist Community, “Our Mission,” <https://yalehumanists.com/about/> (accessed July 9, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Interfaith Youth Core, “Interfaith Cooperation on Campus,” <http://www.ifyc.org> (accessed July 9, 2017).

IFYC staff identifies as non-religious and the number of IFYC alums that identify as atheist, agnostic, or secular humanist is about the same as the Roman Catholic, Hindu, and Buddhist alumni combined.<sup>14</sup> Connecting The Humanity Coalition with IFYC expands the setting and has the potential to increase college and university campus involvement.

Far from Connecticut, and yet connected to the project through my work as a faculty member in a Master of Arts in Interfaith Action program, is yet another transformative institution — Claremont Lincoln University (CLU). The foundational principal of Claremont Lincoln is a uniting statement of cooperation that The Humanity Coalition seeks to emulate.<sup>15</sup> It is what is commonly known as the Golden Rule: do unto others as you would have others do unto you. The university is intentionally and fully digital, which allows for students from all over the world to engage in their Master degree programs. This digital university has a high number of students who serve in the United States military. The religious demographic of students is primarily Christian but does include some unaffiliated and some minority religious traditions. CLU currently has two Humanist faculty members teaching in the Interfaith Action program. The significance of this inclusion cannot be overstated.

The project setting for The Humanity Coalition is not simple. The setting is both untraditional and fluid. That said, The Humanity Coalition will have a physical presence through my home office in Old Lyme, Connecticut, and could at some point also have a

---

<sup>14</sup> Hemant Mehta, "This Major Interfaith Organization Now Includes More Non-Theists Than Ever Before," *The Friendly Atheist*, January 1, 2014, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2014/01/01/this-major-interfaith-organization-now-includes-more-non-theists-than-ever-before/> (accessed July 10, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Claremont Lincoln University, "Mission Statement," <http://www.claremontlincoln.edu/about/mission-vision-values/> (accessed January 12, 2017).

physical presence within the offices of Yale Humanist Community. But the bricks and mortar setting is secondary. The more important setting is beyond the walls of a traditional office or congregation. There will be periodic Humanity Coalition gatherings held in various public spaces throughout Connecticut, and possibly in other states, allowing the setting to change to meet the needs of the constituents.

Of equal importance is the setting that comes out of a larger vision for The Humanity Coalition. That vision is a vibrant online presence via website and social media, as well as live-streamed and recorded events. This larger vision initiative will increase inclusivity and dispense with the in-person-only meetings that limit participation and discourage commitment. Expanding the setting to one of a virtual presence has the potential to forge deep and lasting partnerships with transformative institutions such as The Interfaith Alliance, Interfaith Youth Core, and Claremont Lincoln University.

As asserted by McKeeman, ministry is that quality of being in community that affirms human dignity. That is the ministry vision of The Humanity Coalition project; bringing people together and educating Connecticut's religious believers and Humanists on the importance and power of collaboration as realized through the work of cooperative engagement. Ministry is all that we — Humanists and religious believers — do together.

## CHAPTER 2

### POTHOLE

*While traveling our separated roads through life, we are also either road signs or potholes on the roads of others.*

— Eugene J. Martin, African American visual artist

#### **The Challenge**

Humanism uses science and reason to make sense of the world, puts human beings at the center of one's moral outlook, and champions human rights for everyone. The fact is that many, if not most religious believers, do not know what Humanism is or know that there are Humanists who would be willing to collaborate with members of interfaith groups. Conversely, many Humanists do not know that there are religious adherents and interfaith groups that are willing to collaborate. Awareness was the foremost challenge in my project.

It was at the 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions, in Salt Lake City, Utah, where a startling lack of awareness was demonstrated. The five-day event teemed with nearly ten thousand attendees from over one hundred countries and nearly as many faith traditions represented. What struck me was the stunning lack of Humanist voices in plenary sessions, workshops, and key presentations.<sup>16</sup> I am not of the mind that the absence or lack was intentional on the part of either group (religious believers or Humanists), but rather a near total lack of awareness on the part of both groups.

---

<sup>16</sup> Kathleen Green, "The Missing Link: Humanists at the Parliament of World Religions," *The Humanist*, November 2, 2015, <https://thehumanist.com/commentary/the-missing-link-humanists-at-the-parliament-of-world-religions>.

## Dangerous Stereotyping

Lack of awareness plays a large role in the stereotypes perpetuated by both religious adherents and Humanists about each other. Fear is a dangerous component that can nurture stereotypes and incite destructive behavior. Fellow Humanist colleagues and authors of *Faithist: How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious*, and *A Better Life: 100 Atheists Speak Out on Joy & Meaning in a World Without God*, have received death threats because of their Humanist identity and non-theist ideas. But it's not just my friends who are on the receiving end of destructive stereotyping. Fear and the lack of awareness are evident in a recent survey done by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center.<sup>17</sup> That survey showed that only 79% of people polled thought it was true that atheists have the same rights as other American citizens. One out of every seven people in the U.S. think atheists don't have equal rights and only 15% of those surveyed named freedom of religion when asked to name the rights guaranteed under the First Amendment. U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions declared that secularists are unfit for government as freedom of speech is about determining truth, and without God there is not truth.<sup>18</sup> And while the United States Constitution is secular, at the state level there are serious issues of discrimination with eight states with laws that block non-theists from holding public office. In Arkansas, atheists are explicitly disqualified from testifying in court, and there are similar laws in Texas, Tennessee, Maryland, Mississippi, and Pennsylvania.

---

<sup>17</sup> Annenberg Public Policy Center, *Americans Are Poorly Informed About Basic Constitutional Provisions*, September 12, 2017, <https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-are-poorly-informed-about-basic-constitutional-provisions/>.

<sup>18</sup> Jay Michaelson, "Revelation: Jeff Sessions Said 'Secularists' Are Unfit for Government," *The Daily Beast*, January 12, 2017, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/jeff-sessions-said-secularists-are-unfit-for-government>.



Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with other and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.<sup>19</sup>

And yet, the reality for some non-theists around the globe can literally be a matter of life or death. Thirteen countries consider atheism a capital offense punishable by death. In 2015 there were five atheist bloggers in Bangladesh that were hacked to death by religious extremists. Anyone who thinks that religious discrimination is limited in scope and that religious freedom only applies to those who are religiously affiliated is sorely mistaken.

The *Freedom of Thought Report of 2017* is a global compilation of the rights, legal status and discrimination against Humanists, atheists and the non-religious, and states that in 2017 alone the non-religious were persecuted in at least seven countries.<sup>20</sup> This persecution included the murder of Humanists or atheists in Pakistan, India, and the Maldives, along with death sentences being faced in Sudan and Saudi Arabia. Humanists are often forced to choose between being invisible and being a target for attack. The real threats, danger, and fearful lack of awareness that is experienced by Humanists is too often overlooked or not even known by those outside of Humanist circles.

It must also be acknowledged that for far too long some Humanist voices, in the form of extremist atheism and anti-theism, have dominated the perceptions of the public. New Atheism came onto the scene in the mid-2000s and, generally speaking, is proving

---

<sup>19</sup> UN General Assembly, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," 217 (III) A. Paris, 1948. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> (accessed August 6, 2017).

<sup>20</sup> International Humanist and Ethical Union, *Freedom of Thought 2017: A Global Report on the Rights, Legal Statue and Discrimination Against Humanist, Atheists and the Non-religious*, Key Countries Edition, 2017 <http://freethoughtreport.com/download-the-report>.

to be as rigid, conservative, and extremist as the religious zealots they rail against. New Atheists have been referred to by some nonbelievers and agnostics as “secular fundamentalists.”<sup>21</sup> This has only furthered the divide between atheist Humanists and religious adherents. I’ve met too many people who think atheism is a monolith, and some who think all Humanists are atheists. This is the unacceptable counterpart to thinking there is a monolithic Christian or Muslim. Yes, there are fundamental extremist secularists just as there are fundamental extremist religionists.

### **Finding Common Language**

The first step in approaching the fear and distrust associated with the common stereotyping found among both religious adherents and Humanists is building awareness. What was most important in my initial awareness conversations with both religious adherents and humanists was addressing the challenge of language — a pothole in and of itself. As a UU minister who served theologically diverse congregations for over a decade, I am all too familiar with the challenge of language. The challenge is for both Humanists and religious adherents to wrestle with. But the biggest issue I have faced is use of exclusive religious language that is a challenge for some non-theists, and the use of any religious language at all that is a challenge for other non-theists. I am not suggesting that religious language should never be used, or that being disingenuous is required. This is about an intentionality of awareness and a compassionate sensitivity to religious diversity. It can be easy for religious adherents to overlook their own use of religious language and assume that such use in interfaith gatherings is all-inclusive. That assumption is a mistake and begs for deeper awareness. A member of my Site Team has

---

<sup>21</sup> David Hoelscher, “New Atheism, Worse Than You Think,” *Counterpunch*, January 29, 2016, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/01/29/new-atheism-worse-than-you-think/>.

suggested that part of the reason there are so many religiously unaffiliated people is due to use of theological jargon by religious communities at a time when there is a longing for spiritual deepening that can be expressed and experienced in more secular terms. Fortunately, because of my experience in leading congregations where such a challenges had to be addressed, I am able to give serious and thoughtful consideration to various perspectives and find inclusive language.

A report by the Commission on Appraisal of the Unitarian Universalist Association, *Engaging Our Theological Diversity*, speaks to the challenge of theological diversity and unity.

The range of theological views represented in our congregations' collective pews is certainly wider than ever before...Our unity may be around values, practices, or even some nonreligious aspect of identity, and not around shared beliefs at all. In other words, while our diversity may be theological, our unity may be something else entirely.<sup>22</sup>

This statement could have just as easily been speaking about the current state of Humanism and the shifting interfaith landscape. With regard to religious language and speaking to the challenge it presents in UU congregations, the Commission on Appraisal report suggests

It is perhaps not a language of reverence that is needed, so much as a practice of reverence. It is not whether we call upon the Spirit of Life or God/Goddess and see that energy operative in our lives but what we offer to life. It is not enough to want readings or sermons to inspire us; we have to be willing to be inspired, even if it might mean we have to rethink things and possibly do things differently. This doesn't require a particular theology or theistic thinking. It requires an attitude shift... a shift in perspective.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Commission on Appraisal Unitarian Universalist Association, *Engaging Our Theological Diversity: A Report by the Commission on Appraisal* (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005), 10.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 107.

Once again, what has come out of the Commission's report can be applied beyond UU congregations, to both Humanist and interfaith groups.

Establishing acceptable working definitions of Humanism and interfaith was essential for the purposes of the research for my project. The majority of religious adherents in the interfaith groups were either not familiar with Humanism or were not sure how to define it. The foremost influential institution for Humanism is the American Humanist Association. Their definition of Humanism is "a progressive lifestance that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead meaningful, ethical lives capable of adding to the greater good of humanity."<sup>24</sup> It is short and to the point; yet, I wanted something slightly more explicit. I adapted the definition of Humanism purported by the British Humanist Association — a philosophical tradition that puts humanity and other living things at the center of your moral outlook, looks not to the supernatural but to science and reason to make sense of the world, and supports human rights for everyone.<sup>25</sup> This definition was embraced by the Humanists and understood and appreciated by the religious adherents.

The word interfaith was much more difficult to define in a way that does not engender exclusivity to anyone outside traditional religious circles. Unfortunately, I found that among some Humanists, and even among some religious adherents, the definition of interfaith included only Abrahamic faith traditions, or was strictly limited to Christian denominations. I chose to use the definition posited by Eboo Patel, founder and Executive Director of the Interfaith Youth Core. Patel describes interfaith in two parts.

---

<sup>24</sup> American Humanist Association, "Definition of Humanism," <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/definition-of-humanism/> (accessed January 10, 2017).

<sup>25</sup> Humanist UK, "Defining Humanism," <https://humanism.org.uk/humanism/> (accessed January 10, 2017).

Inter is the relationships between people who orient around religion differently; and faith is the relationship between an individual and a religious or philosophical tradition.<sup>26</sup> This description of interfaith is unlike any other I have seen or heard. It is highly inclusive as it casts a wide circle for all those who wish to engage. I can't say it was embraced by the Humanists in the same way it was embraced by the religious adherents. The concept of faith is not wholly religious to me, but it is viewed as exclusively religious and not applicable to some who identify as Humanist or non-religious. Without a full embrace, the definition of interfaith I chose to use was accepted for the purposes of the project.

Having inclusive definitions helped to create a sense of trust within and among the religious adherents and Humanists that participated in the research for The Humanity Coalition project. Not only did I have to be trustworthy as a researcher and as Humanist interfaith leader, this trust proved to be paramount as both groups can demonize and vilify the other and fall back into the pattern of perpetuating destructive stereotypes. I cannot say with any certainty that the trust has yet grown beyond the confines of The Humanity Coalition research gatherings. A fixed mindset that has been nurtured by dangerously divisive religious ideology, media sensationalism, and personal wounds, is hard to change and must be consistently challenged.

### **Worthy of Attention**

I have been told on more than one occasion that the lack of Humanists in interfaith engagement is not an issue with serious implications and, therefore, not worthy of extensive research and effort. I've had to discern for myself whether or not what I view as a challenge is indeed a pothole as explained by NYTS professor Dr. Moody-

---

<sup>26</sup> Patel, *Interfaith Leadership*, 14.

Shepherd.<sup>27</sup> As she described the pothole as a hard-to-avoid and potentially destructive problem that my project should seek to fill, I began to envision a disconnect between religious adherents and Humanists who are each engaged in social justice work. The disconnect *is* a pothole and my project seeks to fill it by bringing people together to consider working on social justice issues where shared values can be found.

I continue to reflect on Eugene Martin's quote that asserts we human beings are either road signs or potholes in the journey of others, and I am compelled to counter those who do not recognize the seriousness and worth of this project. My ministry is a call to create beacons that shine as road signs in the journey of others at a time when the separation of church and state is crumbling rapidly, religious freedom is being defined by religious extremists, and politicians call for the removal of entire religious groups. Ministry that brings people together is an urgent obligation, and finding ways to bring people of divergent religious views and experiences together is a necessary challenge.

Educating people on the impact of collaboration where there are shared values is a desperately needed undertaking as the "isms" that plague our society, and their respective justice campaigns (racial justice, environmental justice, reproductive justice, economic justice, etc.), can be positively impacted by the combined efforts of religious adherents and Humanists.

### **Continuing Challenges**

I am not the first, and certainly not the only one, to call for the inclusion of Humanists in interfaith engagement. The World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) is a non-profit organization at Georgetown University. WFDD documents the work of

---

<sup>27</sup> Class discussion at NYTS, led by Dr. Eleanor Moody-Shepherd, June 21, 2016.

faith-based institutions and promotes innovative partnerships that contribute to positive and inclusive development outcomes. In 2017, WFDD produced a report that explores the history, ideas, and future directions of interfaith engagement. This report confirms a common call for inclusion of indigenous religious traditions, pagans, non-believers, and “adherents of various faces of humanism.”<sup>28</sup> The questions about inclusion are linked to theological and philosophical questions about the nature of religion as well as the practical definition of religious tolerance. WFDD reports that some interfaith leaders fear that “their orthodoxy might be compromised.”<sup>29</sup> It is clear that the inclusion challenge persists.

This doctoral project is a tremendous undertaking that includes disappointments and setbacks along with triumphs and joy. Perhaps foremost is the ongoing awareness-raising and education that is needed between the religious and Humanist communities — critical to the project’s success long-term. The continuing education needed is best described as what Eboo Patel asserts as an important part of the interfaith leader’s task: “...construct environments that highlight similarities in faiths across diverse people and groups,”<sup>30</sup> with faith defined as how people relate to their religious or ethical traditions. Additionally, while The Humanity Coalition is not, at this time, planning to register as a 501C3 nonprofit institution, financial challenges are real. The cost of technology usage, large gathering venues, and possible administrative support may not be astronomical, but

---

<sup>28</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue, *Interfaith Journeys: An Exploration of History, Ideas, and Future Directions* (Washington, DC: World Faiths Development Dialogue, 2017) <https://s3.amazonaws.com/berkeley-center/170201WFDDInterfaithJourneysExplorationHistoryIdeasFutureDirections.pdf>, 6.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>30</sup> Patel, *Interfaith Leadership*, 39, 75.

the financial challenges call for serious consideration of future partnerships with transformative organizations that have the means and willingness to support The Humanity Coalition.

I expect that my project will help to create new relationships between Humanists and religious believers, strengthen fragile ties, deepen already existing strong bonds, educate people on what Humanism is and the power of interfaith cooperation, establish a collective voice for justice and change in Connecticut, and stand as a model for interfaith groups throughout the country and beyond.



## CHAPTER 3 AWARENESS

*The mind, this globe of awareness, is a starry universe that when you push off with your foot, a thousand new roads become clear, as you yourself do at dawn, sailing through the light.*

— Rumi, Sufi Muslim Mystic

### **Raise the Roof**

Growth trends and best practices for numeric growth in membership are standard areas of study for Unitarian Universalist clergy. One of the popular books is by church consultant Alice Mann — *Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition*. Mann describes living in a growth plateau zone as “...straddling the San Andreas Fault.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, if you know where the rifts occur and what other, deeper movements might be driving the eruption, you can make better decisions. She suggests that there will be some forces more powerful than others and some will be more influential. Mann writes about congregational ability to shift focus of authority and leadership as precipitated by growth in the number of participant members. I have come to think of the phrase “raising the roof,” and the description presented by Mann, in a way that serves the purposes of my project. Raising the roof signifies change that comes out of lifting limitations and shaking up the comfortable status quo. The Humanity Coalition seeks to change the face of interfaith engagement by shaking up status quo assumptions about the people who seek to engage.

---

<sup>31</sup> Alice Mann, *Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 10.

Rather than raise the roof to make room for larger membership numbers and a shift in authority or leadership, I want to raise the roof on awareness between Humanists and religious adherents that will in turn make room for more people. This involves knowing not only where the rifts occur but also becoming aware of deeper forces at play. Raising the roof on awareness became my cornerstone goal for The Humanity Coalition project as without awareness the chances of cooperating, collaborating, and coalescing are slight at best. I chose to approach this task by engaging in an outreach campaign to Connecticut Humanist groups while also conducting round table discussions with Connecticut interfaith groups.

Leadership is a concept that is continuously evolving and complex. Raising the roof on awareness also relates to leadership, my own and that of interfaith and Humanist leaders. Working toward cooperation between and among seemingly dissimilar groups calls for change that requires transformational leadership. This type of leadership begins with awareness and inspires wholeness of being, so that thoughts, feelings and behaviors are consistent. Transformational leaders raise the bar, if not the roof, by appealing to higher ideals and values; modelling the values themselves. Bernard Bass identified three ways in which leaders transform followers: 1. Increasing their awareness of task importance and value; 2. Getting them to focus first on organizational goals, rather than their own interests; and 3. Activating their higher-order needs as defined by Abraham Maslow's Theory of Human Needs.<sup>32</sup> The Humanity Coalition demands leadership that is transformational in nature as it appeals to social values and thus encourages collaboration, rather than individual focus and gratification.

---

<sup>32</sup> Transformational Leadership, "Definition of Transformational Leadership," <http://transformationalleadership.net> (accessed May 8, 2017).

## **Raising Awareness among Humanists**

I entered the gathering room at my first presentation meeting with a local Humanist group and introduced myself by happily claiming my own identity as a Humanist. I was taken aback by the palpable vibe of hesitation and wariness in the room. Certainly not every person in the room was hesitant or wary, but the energy was strong enough that I realized I had underestimated the depth of trust needed for this project. I realized that the rift was not to be taken lightly and indeed there were deeper forces at play.

Five of the Humanist groups hold monthly evening meetings and the majority of them schedule their programming several months in advance. This is why only two of the six vibrant Humanist groups I had identified were available to meet with me. The first group meeting took place before I became the Executive Director of Yale Humanist Community. The second group meeting was after that title was added to my introduction and the vibe was decidedly more relaxed. It appears that I needed to have a Humanist-credentialed role in order for at least some of the group members to fully trust and engage with me.

An important component of my interaction with the groups was surveying all participants before I presented information about my research and project. The purpose of the pre-survey was to determine the level of awareness regarding interfaith groups in Connecticut, ascertain if participants had ever engaged with interfaith groups, and to gauge initial willingness to collaborate with such groups.<sup>33</sup> The majority of Humanists I spoke with and surveyed were aware of one or two interfaith groups in Connecticut, but

---

<sup>33</sup> See Appendix B.

weren't sure there were any others, or didn't know where they were located, the issues they worked on, or if they were open to cooperating with Humanists. In fact, just fewer than 30% of all the Connecticut Humanists I surveyed had ever been involved in any interfaith dialogue or project.<sup>34</sup>

At one point in the presentation I showed a slide that listed all of the social justice issues that I have known interfaith groups to be involved in:

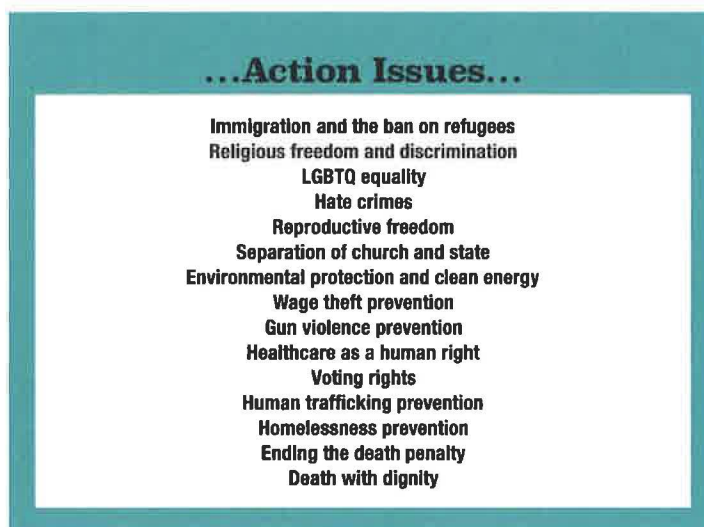


Figure 2. Interfaith Social Issues

Not every interfaith group takes on every issue but the list brought out declarations of surprise from the Humanists. The issue of separation of church and state was probably the most surprising. Sharing the list provided an opening to consideration of common ground and there was agreement that a plethora of social justice issues are appropriate for cooperation. Getting the Humanists to take a look at some of those issues was a big step in raising the roof on awareness.

One particular area where trust seemed to be tenuous at best was choice of language. As explained in the previous chapter, I needed to choose definitions of

---

<sup>34</sup> See Appendix D.

Humanism and interfaith that would keep the proverbial door open to conversation. The majority of Humanists were accepting of the definition of interfaith that I used but made it clear that the acceptance was only for the purposes of the research and project. I had hoped that by using a definition that was generated by the leader of the Interfaith Youth Core, where there are staff and alumni who identify as nonreligious, I would get greater buy-in. Some Humanists were not accepting of my definition but yet were still willing to participate in the surveys and listen to my presentation.

Once the presentation was finished, a post-survey was offered. This instrument gathered data on awareness created from the presentation materials.<sup>35</sup> It also gauged willingness to collaborate with interfaith groups and asked participants to name possible common ground issues they would be willing to work on. The results were what I had expected, although most of the participants claimed the only new information they gleaned was learning about the social justice issues that interfaith groups have been involved in.

Not surprising, but disappointing, was hearing from Humanists over and over again that they were suspicious of interfaith groups due to past negative experience with proselytizing or outright rejection because of their Humanist identity. This guardedness continued to be expressed after the presentation, albeit by a very small faction of Humanists. It became increasingly clear to me that the hesitation and wariness I had felt at the first meeting was due to a rift created by negative experiences and perceived rejection. The impact of those experiences proved to be quite powerful as they continued to perpetuate perceptions in an adverse manner that made it difficult to imagine any other

---

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix C.

possibility. But I was heartened when close to 85% of the Humanist participants indicated that they would be willing to collaborate with interfaith groups on issues where they found common ground. There was hope.

While I met in person with just two of the five identified Humanist groups, using SurveyMonkey and a video recording of the presentation posted on my website, allowed for participation from Humanists in the other three groups. And although I did not have a tool to verify that the entire presentation was viewed, or that the surveys were taken at the instructed times, the survey results were nearly identical between the live and online Humanists.

### **Raising Awareness Among Interfaith Groups**

Hearty handshakes, hugs, and requests for continued conversation in private were plentiful at my meetings with Connecticut interfaith groups. What a change in energy from the Humanist meetings. Maybe it was the offering of food? Or was it the perception that I was one of them — ordained clergy? The purpose of the round table discussions was to raise awareness about the Humanist groups throughout the state, gauge the willingness of the interfaith groups to collaborate with Humanists, and consider inviting them to work side-by-side on social justice issues impacting Connecticut. Regardless of the warm reception I received, it became immediately clear that there was a lot of awareness-raising needed.

The round table process followed the same format as my meetings with the Humanist groups: pre-survey, presentation, post-survey. Fortunately, I was able to arrange meetings with four of the five identified interfaith groups. Two of the groups were made up entirely of religious leaders and the other two included lay leaders. I also offered the surveys and presentation online just as I did for the Humanists. The biggest

difference with the round table discussions was that I provided lunch. This was a suggestion made by one of the interfaith lay leaders as a way to encourage attendance and participation in a midweek, midday meeting.

Just as the Humanist groups were surprised by particulars in the presentation, so were the interfaith groups. What appeared to surprise them the most was learning that Humanists look like me. There was genuine amazement expressed when I shared that Humanists are serving in our armed forces, as chaplains on college campuses, and in public office. A second surprise for the interfaith groups was the number of active Humanist groups in Connecticut. All but four individuals from among the five interfaith groups were unaware of any Humanist group in the state. This further revealed the fact that the majority of those attending the round table discussions did not know what Humanism was.

When completing the pre-survey, at least one person from each interfaith group I met with admitted aloud that they were unable to answer the question that asked if they personally knew any Humanists. They were unable to answer because they were not familiar with the label. Less than 20% of the surveyed interfaith participants had ever personally known anyone who identified as a Humanist or had ever worked in an interfaith setting with anyone who identified as a Humanist. But according to the post-survey, nearly 90% of the interfaith participants said they would be willing to collaborate with Humanists on issues where they found common ground.

Dr. Paul Hedges postulates about the importance of including atheists in interfaith dialogue, despite the apparent rifts and long-standing obstacles. Hedges justifies his views by explaining that dialogue is never between ideologies, religions, or worldviews,

but always and only between people.<sup>36</sup> He concurs with the idea that face to face encounters can help break down stereotypes about the Other, and see more clearly shared values. The reasons Hedges gives for including the non-religious worldview in interfaith dialogue is as follows.

As people we meet other people and not systems. The distinction of religion and non-religion is not always clear, and if we respect the rights of all individuals in terms of their freedom of religion and belief, then we have to include and respect all these options as part of the conversation.<sup>37</sup>

### **Theological Research**

When contemplating the concept of awareness-raising for The Humanity Coalition, there was my own level of awareness to be considered. The best place to start was with required theological research, but that typically means conducting an exegesis of sacred text. The challenge I faced was a lack of sacred text for Humanists. As a former Christian, I am drawn to a passage in the book of Acts that is focused on the Apostle Paul's visit to Athens, Greece. Paul shares his faith with one of the leading intellectual bodies of the city and quotes Greek philosophers Epimenides and Aratus; affirming the viewpoints that they espoused (Acts 17:16-34 NRSV). This is an example of finding common ground with other faith traditions while not compromising your own, but it still leaves me without a Humanist sacred text.

The one text that does address Humanism as a philosophical tradition, setting forth principles and values, is the Humanist Manifesto. In order to answer the question "What does the Humanist Manifesto have to say about working on social justice issues alongside religious believers?" I engaged in a secular exegetical study of the Humanist

---

<sup>36</sup> Paul Hedges, *Towards Better Disagreement: Religions and Atheism in Dialogue* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2017), 45.

<sup>37</sup> Hedges, *Towards Better Disagreement*, 47.



Manifesto in its three iterations. The focus of the study was locating evidence to support interfaith engagement by Humanists. I used a topic structure; beginning with authorship and moving into historical setting, political circumstances, and themes. The exegesis concludes with application for interfaith cooperation.

### ***Authorship***

The original Humanist Manifesto was written by Canadian philosopher Roy Wood Sellars and American Unitarian minister Raymond Bragg. It was published in 1933 with 34 signers.<sup>38</sup> The signers were predominately university professors of philosophy, religion, theology, sociology, and English. The universities were primarily from the east coast (Cornell, Harvard, Tufts, Columbia, Pittsburgh, and Smith College), although the University of Michigan and Chicago were also represented. Signers also included Unitarian and Universalist clergy, a rabbi, ethical culture leader, attorney, newspaper editors, and the former editor of *The Christian Register*. Particularly notable signers were philosopher John Dewey and Unitarian Minister R. Lester Mondale (brother of vice president, Walter Mondale). Mondale was the only person to sign all three of the Humanist Manifesto documents. While the list of signers is impressive and certainly scholarly, it must be noted that all of the signers were men.

Humanist Manifesto II was written by Paul Kurtz (considered the father of Secular Humanism) and Unitarian minister Edwin H. Wilson. It was published in 1973 with many more signers than the first Manifesto, and the signers did include a handful of

---

<sup>38</sup> American Humanist Association, "A Humanist Manifesto (1933)", <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto1> (accessed April 15, 2016).

women.<sup>39</sup> The second version signers were a diverse group of professors, religious professionals, authors, psychiatrists, nonprofit leaders, school teachers, and included individuals from the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Canada, France, and Scotland. Most notable were Bette Friedan (National Organization of Women), civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph, psychologist B.F. Skinner, and author Isaac Asimov.

The latest version of the Humanist Manifesto was published in 2003 by the American Humanist Association and was authored by a committee from that organization. There were initial signers that included professors and religious professionals, as well as people from Japan, Pakistan, India, and Belgium, the ambassador to Nepal, seminary presidents, employees of the United Nations and US Veterans Administration, and notables such as filmmaker Oliver Stone, author Kurt Vonnegut, Richard Dawkins, Arun Ghandi (grandson of Mahatma Ghandi), and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner, Edward O. Wilson. As well, twenty-one Nobel Laureates have signed. But again, there were far more men than women among the initial signers. The most significant difference between this document and the previous two, with respect to endorsement, is that once the document was published; those who found themselves in agreement with the broad vision expressed in the Manifesto were invited to add their own signatures.<sup>40</sup>

### ***Historical Setting and Political Circumstances***

In Edwin H. Wilson's book, *Genesis of a Humanist Manifesto*, he talks about the setting in which the drafting and publication of the first document, known as "A

---

<sup>39</sup> American Humanist Association, "Humanist Manifesto II (1973)," <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto2/> (accessed April 15, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> American Humanist Association, "Humanist Manifesto III (2003)," <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto3/> (accessed April 15, 2016).

Humanist Manifesto,” took place. Wilson declares that as the pendulum in both religion and politics swings from “the humanistic to the reactionary and theistic,”<sup>41</sup> religious humanism has confidence that it will always swing back to a global faith in humanity. At the time of writing and publishing the first Manifesto, the Great Depression was storming through American life. It was also the period of Christian Modernism. There were only a few religious leaders willing to embrace the Humanist label at the time.

The second Manifesto was written forty years later, and the commonly held assertion is that the writing was a reaction to the overly optimistic tone of the first. This reaction comes after the experience of Hitler’s reign, totalitarianism, brutality of war, and “widespread government espionage, and other abuses of power by military, political, and industrial elites, and the continuance of unyielding racism...”<sup>42</sup> This document was undoubtedly a socio-political commentary. Interestingly, while the first Manifesto was thought to be overly optimistic in tone, the writers of the second version did concur that a positive and hopeful vision was needed for the twenty-first century.

Politically speaking, Manifesto I promoted a worldwide egalitarian society and Manifesto II appears to move away from libertarian socialism, toward a more economically neutral libertarian stance. The second Manifesto also asserted the importance of an international court and legality of contraception and divorce; issues commonly and widely accepted today. The second Manifesto also supports the controversial stance of the right to abortion.

---

<sup>41</sup> Edwin H. Wilson, *Genesis of a Humanist Manifesto* (Amherst, NY: Humanist Press, 1995), preface.

<sup>42</sup> AHA, “Humanist Manifesto II.”

The third and last version to date appears less radical and revolutionary than the previous versions and offers a fairly simple list of six general points of belief. This is quite a shift from the first document with its fifteen points, and the second with a lengthy and detailed seventeen points. The American Humanist Association says of the third Manifesto, “This document is part of an ongoing effort to manifest in clear and positive terms the conceptual boundaries of Humanism, not what we must believe but a consensus of what we do believe.”<sup>43</sup>

### ***Themes***

The basic themes for all three of the Manifestos are not surprisingly the same: change in the religious landscape, responsibility of humankind for the benefit of humankind, use of science and reason, and shared values and ethics. The first document was the only one to refer to Humanism as a religious movement. The idea was that as a religion, and with the political and religious climate of the time, Humanism would fulfill the need for a new statement of the means and purposes of religion. But along with a complete rejection of supernaturalism and use of the word secular, not found in the first Manifesto, the first Manifesto used the words radical, danger, and fatal to describe the religious landscape of the time and emphasis is placed on how religious Humanism presents a point of view that differs from other religions. The differences include a denial of dualism, denial of supernatural guarantees, no distinction between the secular and sacred in life, and importance of human fulfillment in the here and now.

There are no references in the first Manifesto to specific political or social issues other than the need for economic equitable distribution, but there is also a strong

---

<sup>43</sup> AHA, “Humanist Manifesto III.”

emphasis on the need for religion to meet the needs of the time through continuous change. The document closes with pointing out that the central task of Humanism is the quest for a good life and that “man” alone is responsible.<sup>44</sup> It is important to note that gender exclusive language is used in the first Manifesto. This particular point fits with the fact that even as women were being ordained as Unitarian and Universalist clergy at the time of publication, there was not a single woman’s signature on the document.

Many changes are reflected in the second Manifesto. Use of the words alternative, non-theist, and humility are noted. Goals for Humanism and a Humanist way of life are mentioned, along with specific emphasis on the points of the document not being a creed. Humanism is referred to in Manifesto II as an ethical process and in this version there are many forms of Humanism named.

Rather than expressing general ideals on the social issues of the time there is tremendous specificity in the second Manifesto. The issues mentioned are sexuality, civil liberties (including the right to die), separation of church and state, universal education, world community of peace as war is obsolete, responsible use of technology, and careful use of the planet’s resources. While religious critics may argue that ethics cannot exist without religion, or more specifically without God, essayist Frank Zindler posits, “The behavior of Atheists is subject to the same rules of sociology, psychology, and neurophysiology that govern the behavior of all members of our species, religionists included.”<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> AHA, “Humanist Manifesto I.”

<sup>45</sup> Frank Zindler, “Ethics Without Gods,” *American Atheists*, <https://www.atheists.org/activism/resources/ethics-without-gods/> (accessed April 14, 2016).

A welcome change seen in the second Manifesto is gender language and particular reference to “men and women.” The similarities found between the first and second Manifestos are: 1. Humanism being an alternative to traditional religion and required to meet present needs of the time, 2. Continued reliance on science and reason, 3. Belief in no life after death, and 4. The dignity of each human being as a central value. Humanist Manifesto II closes in a similar way to the original version with the emphasis on human responsibility. The most noticeable difference is use of the word faith in the document’s final statement: “... the document is an expression of a living and growing faith.”<sup>46</sup> This word is not found in the succeeding version.

The third Manifesto moves away from religion in a way that clearly distinguishes it from the former two versions. In fact, the words religion and spiritual are entirely absent from the document, and the word secular is used for the first time. In the third version, Humanism is referred to as a progressive philosophy of life and life stance. It’s a positive, accessible statement that focuses on a consensus of belief. While the document may lack intensity and fervor it can be seen as offering a positive perspective on what *Humanism* is rather than a negative or scathing diatribe on what traditional religion is. Atheist blogger Michael W. Jones has said,

The Humanist Manifesto has always struck me as neutral. It lacks the force of many such documents, perhaps because it was written more or less by committee. While the values and qualities that it brings to mind are good ones, it never seems to really say anything to my spirit. However, if looked at the right way, it can evoke worthwhile thoughts in one’s mind. Just because it is not dynamic does not mean that it is useless.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> AHA, “Humanist Manifesto II.”

<sup>47</sup> Michael W. Jones, “Humanist Manifesto III A Review,” *The Eloquent Atheist*, July 26, 2012, <http://www.eloquentatheist.com/2012/07/humanist-manifesto-iii-a-review/> (accessed April 14, 2016).

The six points contained in the third Manifesto speak in generalities and without the fearful tone found in I and II. The most significant similarities in the three Manifestos are the claims that humanity alone bears responsibility in creating a better world, there is no life beyond death, and use of science and reason requires a rejection of supernaturalism.

### ***Application***

In today's politically and religiously fractured world there are significant applications from all three versions of The Humanist Manifesto that call for cooperation among people. The changes both subtle and forthright in the document lineage show a willingness to adapt to the time of authorship with a vision towards the future. Additionally, the willingness to recognize the documents as imperfect and non-static is encouraging. That said, there are also numerous points of potential disagreement between Humanists and religious believers, particularly on socio-political and religious issues such as abortion and life after death. But the use of reason that includes humility and compassion, as mentioned in the second and third versions of the Manifesto, has the possibility of fostering understanding and collaborative engagement. Indeed, it is the idea of recognizing inherent worth and dignity in each individual, and the acceptance of interdependence that affirms my assertion regarding Humanist involvement in the field of interfaith engagement. In seeking to use the three Humanist Manifestos in bringing Humanists to the interfaith table with religious believers, I would point to the following lines of text:

#### **Manifesto I:**

*Preface* - Religions have always been means for realizing the highest values of life...through all changes religion itself remains constant in its quest for abiding values, an inseparable feature of human life.

*Fifteenth* - We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from them; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.

## **Manifesto II:**

*Preface* - The ultimate goal should be the fulfillment of the potential for growth in each human personality - not for the favored few, but for all of humankind. Only a shared world and global measures will suffice.

But views that merely reject theism are not equivalent to humanism. They lack commitment to the positive belief in the possibilities of human progress and to the values central to it.

*Religion, First* - We appreciate the need to preserve the best ethical teachings in the religious traditions of humankind, many of which we share in common.

*Democratic Society, Ninth* - The separation of church and state and the separation of ideology and state are imperatives. The state should encourage maximum freedom for different moral, political, religious, and social values in society.

*Closing* - We urge recognition of the common humanity of all people. We will survive and prosper only in a world of shared humane values. We can initiate new directions for humankind; ancient rivalries can be superseded by broad-based cooperative efforts.

## **Manifesto III:**

We are committed to treating each person as having inherent worth and dignity...

The joining of individuality with interdependence enriches our lives, encourages us to enrich the lives of others, and inspires hope of attaining peace, justice, and opportunity for all.

Working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness.

Humanists are concerned for the well-being of all, are committed to diversity, and respect those of differing yet humane views.

From this exegetical study I have found evidence in all three versions of The Humanist Manifesto to support the engagement of humanists with religious believers. At the same



time, my own level of awareness has been increased and I now have this study as a tool to use in future awareness presentations to both Humanist and interfaith groups.

### **Ecumenist Competency**

Site Team comment regarding my Ecumenist competency: “Throughout her career Rev. Kathleen has demonstrated a passion for working with people of different faith traditions. She continues to promote ‘Multipath Understanding’ through service projects uniting people from religious communities with those from the humanist community. She will also need the ability to persuade her own community to put social action progress ahead of faith differences.”

Awareness is undoubtedly part of the ecumenist ministerial competency selected as a part of my project. Ironically, I have struggled with New York Theological Seminary’s (NYTS) choice of the word *ecumenist*. While the school uses the Greek origin of the word, “meaning the entire inhabited world,” from my own personal experience, and what I know of commonly held understandings in religious communities and interfaith circles, an ecumenist is a supporter of ecumenism: a movement promoting unity among Christian churches or denominations.<sup>48</sup> Granted there are people who choose to embrace a cultural definition that includes different religions and denominations, but I have not found that choice as widely applied. Over the past fifteen years, I have had ample opportunity to challenge clergy groups that have claimed the interfaith descriptor while the groups were better described as ecumenical. I have noticed that in very recent years there has been a shift to more accurate naming and inclusion of non-Christian and

---

<sup>48</sup> New York Theological Seminary, *Site Team Handbook 2015-2016* (New York: New York Theological Seminary, 2015), 30.

minority religions. This clarification is essential to the expansion of interfaith engagement and inclusion of leaders whose religious identity is not Christian.

The terms interfaith and multifaith are sometimes used synonymously by religious leaders like me. NYTS has chosen to use the term *multifaith* to describe the doctoral concentration that I am focused on. The fact that such a concentration is offered by NYTS is what drew me to the institution. But perhaps there is awareness-raising needed beyond me and The Humanity Coalition participants. I plan to formally request that NYTS re-examine its use of the word ecumenist in future ministerial competency lists, and consider the exclusivity that it demonstrates.

As I grappled with language I continued concentrating on the issue of awareness-raising as it relates to encouraging interfaith understanding and cultivating dialogue. The Rev. Lee Barker, President of Meadville-Lombard Theological School spoke to me in a phone interview about what he has recently observed in the interfaith landscape.<sup>49</sup> Barker acknowledged the Humanists included in interfaith programs he was aware of were affiliated with Unitarian Universalism and it is a tremendous challenge to accommodate non-theist groups. Much of that challenge is attributed to use of religious language and a pervading culture of mistrust. By way of example, he shared that a noteworthy controversy took place in one of Chicago's interfaith leaders groups over the decision to eliminate a mandate of belief in God. But Barker suggested that as religions are feeling stressed, institutions will eventually have to respond by either closing their doors or opening them wider. He said that multifaith recognizes that people can hold more than

---

<sup>49</sup> Conversation with Rev. Lee Barker on May 2, 2017.

one religious identity, or no religious identity, and indicates a willingness to engage diversity.

The Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding (CCIU) is an organization whose mission is to “promote public awareness, understanding about, and respect for, Connecticut's religious pluralism through an array of programs and initiatives.”<sup>50</sup> CCIU was one of the interfaith groups I met with for my project. The organization's Executive Director, the Rev. Terry Schmitt and I met privately to discuss CCIU and interfaith engagement in Connecticut. It was in our conversation that I learned the principal focus of the organization is on educating the public about the world's religions in order to highlight shared values as well as differences.<sup>51</sup> With nine religions represented in CCIU interfaith diversity is evident. Unfortunately, Humanism is not represented but Rev. Schmitt and I did spend some time discussing the possibility of that changing in the future.

Two particular demographics that are not receiving a great deal of attention, but I have begun studying and intend to include in my future outreach for The Humanity Coalition, are the disaffiliated and individuals who consider themselves multifaith. The disaffiliated are sometimes referred to as de-converted, as religious disaffiliation is the act of leaving a religious community, tradition, or faith. As compared to excommunication, disaffiliation is a choice. *Atlantic* writer Emma Green makes the claim that “nones” is an academic nickname for the religiously disaffiliated.<sup>52</sup> I see these as

---

<sup>50</sup> Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding, “Our Full Mission Statement,” <http://www.ccfiu.org/our-mission.html> (accessed June 1, 2017)

<sup>51</sup> Conversation with Rev. Terry Schmitt on June 6, 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Emma Green, “How Will Young People Choose Their Religion?” *The Atlantic*, March 20, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/how-will-young-people-choose-their-religion/474366/>.

distinct groups where some overlap may occur but not all “nones” are religiously disaffiliated. Choosing to not affiliate with any particular religious group is not the same as choosing to disaffiliate from a particular religious group. The disaffiliated are worthy of attention and outreach by the interfaith movement.

A common saying in Japan is that you’re born Shinto, marry Christian, and die Buddhist. According to Hedges, multiple religious belonging is “normal in many parts of Asia and is becoming more common in the West too.”<sup>53</sup> In most Unitarian Universalist congregations today you will find varying hyphenated identities that exemplify this concept: UU-Buddhist, UU-Jew, UU-Humanist. People who choose a multifaith identity do so because they strongly identify with more than one religious tradition and engage in rituals or practices from more than one tradition. Another example is “Jubu”: a label that identifies Jews who practice Buddhist meditation or identify with Buddhism while maintaining a Jewish identity as well. Individuals who claim multifaith identities seem well suited for interfaith engagement and may offer a helpful perspective with regard to finding common ground.

Ecumenist competency is also about providing structural opportunities for multifaith action. By teaching in the Master of Arts in Interfaith Action degree program at Claremont Lincoln University, I continue to expand my interfaith leadership skills. During the timeline of The Humanity Coalition project I taught the course “Religion in the Public Sphere: Faith, Politics, and Rhetoric” during two academic sessions, as well as “Power and Privilege in Self and Society” during one academic session. The first course calls on students to “analyze and interrogate normative and popular categories of religion

---

<sup>53</sup> Hedges, *Toward Better Disagreement*, 169.

while developing a post-secular awareness to interpret the evolving role of religious and secular tradition in the public sphere” and, in the second course, “explore and interpret religion in relation to structure of power and privilege and in the context of cultural, political, and economic histories”.<sup>54</sup> Through facilitation of the course there are multiple opportunities to interact with students in ways that encourage interfaith dialogue and action. The facilitation involves moderating, guiding, and at times leading online discussions between students of differing theological backgrounds and religious orientations. Facilitating also includes conferencing one-on-one with students and offering direction in the interfaith action capstone project they choose to employ as a part of their degree requirements.

My ecumenist competency was fortified through interactions in the *Religion in the Public Sphere* course, with a student I will call “Z”.<sup>55</sup> Claiming a religious history of Protestantism in the southern region of the U.S. that leaned conservative on social issues, Z had traveled the world as an adult and studied with several religious leaders from Eastern traditions. In the first week of the course students were required to provide a video introduction of themselves, stating their personal religious identity and describing their interest in interfaith action. Z tentatively identified himself as a “Sufi-Buddhist Jesus follower.” Throughout the course Z felt increasingly comfortable sharing his religious journey with other students who were mostly unfamiliar with where and with whom Z had studied. The revelations and growth that followed among the cohort of students was inspiring.

---

<sup>54</sup> Claremont Lincoln University, <https://www.claremontlincoln.edu/programs/interfaith-action/#highlights> (accessed June 1, 2017).

<sup>55</sup> Conversation with CLU student on August 23, 2017.

As the course lessons delved into the secular versus religious tradition in the public sphere, Z and I had conversations on the topic of minority religions and the non-theist perspective that was important, yet missing, in interfaith action. Z's awareness is best illustrated by the quote at the start of this chapter. It comes from Z's favorite Sufi writer Rumi. Z pushed off with his foot and a thousand new roads became clear. As a result of the coursework, discussions with fellow students, and my encouragement, Z chose to expand his capstone project by reaching out to local Humanists to include them in the interfaith dialogue circles he was planning. In turn, as Z embraced the identity of what he coined a "hybrid Humanist," my own insight expanded.

## CHAPTER 4 RELATIONSHIP

*A connection is the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.*

— Brenè Brown, Author and research professor

### **Connect the Dots**

When thinking about the idea of connection and how its impact has changed over time, a good question to ask is how many people would you feel comfortable discussing a very important and very personal issue with? The answer is typically very telling. From 1985 to 2004 the average answer to that question dropped from three people they would feel comfortable with to two people. The percentage of people who reported having no confidants at all rose in that same time period from 10% to 25%.<sup>56</sup> I do not have more recent data on that specific question and I can only surmise that in an age of increasing isolation the numbers have not improved. Analysis of nearly one hundred and fifty studies of social support suggest that social isolation increases the risk of death about as much as smoking cigarettes and more than either physical inactivity or obesity. Connection is not dependent on religious affiliation. Regardless of where one finds themselves on the theological or religious continuum, connection is an essential value needed to thrive.

The lack of connection, or more precisely the loneliness that is perpetuated by social isolation, is recognized in regions of the brain that activate in a similar way to

---

<sup>56</sup> Greg Miller, "Why Loneliness Is Hazardous to Your Health," *Science Magazine*, January 14, 2011, <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/331/6014/news-summaries>, 138-140.

when we feel physical pain. Our brain recognizes pain and reacts similarly whether it's the pain of loneliness or stubbing our toe, or worse. The experience of social pain, such as cruel words, or being ignored, feels as real as physical pain and scientists are making the case that our need to connect is as fundamental as our need for food and water.<sup>57</sup> Long before there were any primates with a neocortex, mammals split off from other vertebrates and evolved the capacity to feel social pains and pleasures, forever linking our well-being to our social connectedness. We easily recognize that infants embody this deep need to stay connected, but the truth is that the deep need to be connected is present through our entire lives. From birth to death we need to be connected as we are wired with a need to belong, to be a part of something, to have shared experience. Our interests, motivation, health and happiness are inextricably tied to the feeling that we belong to a greater community that may share common interests and aspirations.

It is often the religious community where adherents go for shared experience. This is especially true in tumultuous times of crisis. Humanist Tom Krattenmaker has broached the subject from a Humanist perspective, writing:

More and more of us are experiencing the ups and downs and triumphs and devastations of human existence — the births and deaths and all the major milestones in between — with no religion to lean on, with no divinely ordered structure to hold us. We face our mortality and all the other vexing mysteries of life naked. What happens now to society, and us?<sup>58</sup>

The answer is that we must seek from each other, and be to each other, the source of energy that research professor Brenè Brown describes in her definition of connection as

---

<sup>57</sup> Matthew D. Lieberman, *Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect* (New York: Crown, 2013), 44.

<sup>58</sup> Tom Krattenmaker, *Confessions of a Secular Jesus Follower: Finding Answers In Jesus For Those Who Don't Believe* (New York: Convergent Books, 2016), 4.



the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued. It's when people can give and receive without judgment, and when they gain strength and nourishment from the relationship.

The Rev. William Murry served as President of Meadville-Lombard Theological School when I arrived there, in Chicago, in 2003. Rev. Murry summed up the Humanist viewpoint on life and our responsibility to it as such: "Life's meaning is not a given, not inherent in life itself, and not dependent on belief in God. We are the meaning makers; we are the ones who make our lives worth living."<sup>59</sup> The second iteration of the Humanist Manifesto concurs, daringly claiming that humans are responsible for what we are or will become as there is no deity that will save us; we must save ourselves. My interpretation of both Rev. Murry's sentiments and the Manifesto's claim is that we simply cannot live for ourselves alone and we don't accomplish anything in this world alone. Human beings are social beings and participants in the interconnected web of all life. The joining of individuality with interdependence enriches our lives, encourages us to enrich the lives of others, and inspires hope of attaining peace and opportunity for all. Such interdependence is where human beings find identity, meaning, and fulfillment as it is manifest in connection.

### **Psychological Research**

Within organizations and institutions, religious and otherwise, a common area of connection focus is membership. With the increasing use of technology and creation of virtual communities, the idea of membership continues to evolve in religious and nonprofit organizations. What I sought to examine through this project was trends that

---

<sup>59</sup> William R. Murry, *Becoming More Fully Human: Religious Humanism As A Way Of Life* (New Haven, CT: Religious Humanism Press, 2011),

might exist in interfaith participation, especially with regard to the notion of membership and diversity of religious perspectives, as well as research on membership and/or participation changes in religious and Humanist communities in general. It is important to note that the concept of membership in religious communities has changed over the last several decades. Participation and engagement have become important factors of congregational mission growth rather than numeric growth. The idea of membership in the Unitarian Universalist tradition is tied to financial contributions and voting privileges.

Social media is changing how people join congregations. There are approximately seven in ten Americans currently using social media today. That's a huge bump in usage from just 5% of American adults in 2005 to 67% of the public today; confirming the fact that we live in a digital culture that cannot be ignored.<sup>60</sup> Unitarian Universalist and multifaith social media consultant Peter Bowden posits five ways in which social media is changing the process of connecting and joining congregations:<sup>61</sup>

1. People do extensive online research of congregations and faith traditions
2. After research, many people participate in a congregation remotely to help determine whether or not it is right for them
3. Social media must be used for more than outreach as people will only visit a congregation in person if they feel completely confident that it's a good fit
4. The transition from online participation to onsite participation comes with high hopes and expectations that require affirmation and a nearly immediate connection

---

<sup>60</sup> Pew Research Center Internet & Technology, "Social Media Fact Sheet," <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/> (accessed January 25, 2018).

<sup>61</sup> Peter Bowden, "5 Ways Social Media is Changing How People Join Congregations," *Leading Congregations*, March 9, 2017, <http://leadingcongregations.com/2017/03/09/5-ways-social-media-is-changing-how-people-join-congregations/> (accessed June 1, 2017).

5. It is essential to offer clear next steps for community connection during that first onsite visit.

I can say from my own decade of experience as a congregational minister, serving diverse congregations across the country that varied in size from one hundred members to nearly four hundred members, the five techniques from Bowden are not being implemented in intentional and thoughtful ways in most congregations.

One of two religious communities, both UU, who are successfully utilizing technology with regard to membership and affiliation is All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma.<sup>62</sup> All Souls offers its virtual members access to pastoral care, weekly emails that include Sunday sermons, livestreamed events, and weekly content on a weekly blog page. Virtual members must be at least fourteen years of age, live more than 200 miles from the congregation's physical location, and are required to support the mission and vision of the congregation through a financial pledge. The congregation's Communications Manager explained that the church did a "soft-launch and testing" of the planned Virtual Membership process in May and June of 2017, and fully launched the program in July and August.<sup>63</sup> As of January 1, 2018 All Souls has thirty-three virtual members. They are developing specific programming for those virtual members and plan to do another campaign to launch that programming in order to increase virtual membership. All Souls Tulsa certified just over two thousand total members in January of 2017.

---

<sup>62</sup> All Souls Unitarian Church, "Virtual Membership," <http://allsoulschurch.org/virtualmembership> (accessed September 23, 2017).

<sup>63</sup> Email conversation with Bonita James on December 7, 2017.

The second religious community worthy of mention is the UU digital congregation, Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF).<sup>64</sup> CLF is known as a church without walls and boasts thirty-five hundred members from all over the world. This digital congregation has members from fifty-three countries. The congregation employs a fulltime Senior Minister and several other ministers, as well as support staff. CLF offers online worship, classes, family resources, a live talk show, and is dedicated to several specialized ministries that include Latinx, military personnel and family, and a prison ministry with over seven hundred and thirty members. While CLF did not start as an online community, it grew and evolved according to the needs of UUs who did not have a physical congregation nearby and yet were yearning for connection and spiritual growth.

The digital age and attention to social media is important for Humanist and interfaith groups as well. In Connecticut, nearly all of the Humanist groups are using at least one form of social media for recruitment — MeetUp: an online social networking resource for people to organize or join onsite group meetings with a common interest. About half of the groups use an additional form of social media for participation beyond what MeetUp offers — Facebook. Individuals within the Humanist groups might use Twitter or Instagram but I did not find these platforms being used by the groups themselves. As far as Connecticut interfaith groups and social media are concerned, there's a huge gap. Other than a website, if that exists, it is difficult to find the use of social media in interfaith groups. The difference can be attributed to closed membership and, therefore, no perceived need for outreach.

---

<sup>64</sup> Church of the Larger Fellowship, "Welcome to the Church of the Larger Fellowship," <http://www.questformeaning.org/clfu/about/welcome/> (accessed September 23, 2017).

Connecticut interfaith groups that are not comprised solely of religious leaders, and some Humanist groups, have members or participants who identify as religiously unaffiliated, or “Nones.” They are the second largest religious group in North America and most of Europe. Nones make up a quarter of the population in the United States and there are twenty states in the United States where no religious group contains a greater share of residents than the religiously unaffiliated. Perhaps some of the most interesting data on Nones comes from the LGBT demographic. Forty-six percent of Americans who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender are religiously unaffiliated.<sup>65</sup> That is nearly twice the number of Americans overall who are religiously unaffiliated.

Research that looks at group participation, membership, and the impact of social media must take into account Millennials. While I will not fully address the reasons behind the growing number of Nones, it is worth noting that reports by the Pew Forum claim young adults (under age thirty) today are much more likely to be unaffiliated than previous generations were at a similar stage in their lives; and it is generational replacement that has largely driven the rise of the Nones. Thirty-five percent of American adult Millennials are religiously unaffiliated.<sup>66</sup> But among the unaffiliated some are avowed atheists, others are agnostic, Humanist, and many do not state a preference. Kaya Oakes, author of *The Nones Are Alright: A New Generation of Believers, Seekers, and Those in Between*, spoke to the members of Yale Humanist Community in 2016. She shared her research that found a common interest among Nones to participate in

---

<sup>65</sup> Daniel Cox and Robert P. Jones, “America’s Changing Religious Identity” Executive Summary, <http://www.prii.org/research/american-religious-landscape-christian-religiously-unaffiliated/> (accessed September 9, 2017).

<sup>66</sup> Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, “‘Nones’ on the Rise: One-in-Five Adults Have No Religious Affiliation,” Pew Research Center, October 9, 2012, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise>.

organizations where they can find opportunities for community service, community connection, and working alongside the religious rather than be in opposition to them. Nones as a group are just as complex as most religions, and while the common interest Oakes has documented is not overwhelming, it needs to be fostered.

Contemporary secularity reflects broader trends in society, specifically a decline in traditional patterns of belonging to formal institutions. This is evidenced in religious institutions through the U.S. Religion Census of 2010. The census reports the number of congregations in every U.S. county equivalent for each of two hundred and thirty-six faith groups. Each religious body supplies the number of churches, full members, adherents, and attendees for each county and the study coincides with the U.S. Census. Participating groups use their own definitions to determine what and/or who is counted but the study does provide general guidelines for defining congregations, members, adherents, and attendees. Broadly speaking, between 2000 and 2010, in the United States, there was an increase of congregations but a decrease in actual congregational membership in the United States. The population increased in 2010 by nearly 10% while membership in religious communities dropped by 2%.<sup>67</sup>

Membership can be determined wholly, or in part, by participation or attendance. The Association of Religion Data Archives details religious service attendance from 1972 to 2014. The categories range from the high end of attending several times a week to never attending religious services. The never category was the only category to have an

---

<sup>67</sup> The Association of Religion Data Archives, "U.S. Religion Census: Religious Congregations and Membership Study, 2010 (County File)," <http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/RCMSCY10.asp> / (accessed September 9, 2017).

increase from 2004 to 2014, and the only category to have a steady increase over time. All other categories showed an overall decrease in attendance.

Data on general interfaith organization membership with regard to religious identity is nonexistent. The Arizona Interfaith Movement determines membership by monetary donation and boasts the largest diversity of religious communities that I've seen with twenty-five groups represented — including Scientologists, but no Humanists.<sup>68</sup> After speaking with The Interfaith Alliance in Washington, D.C., and with two of its state affiliate Executive Directors, I know that of the twenty-one affiliate offices across the country only three are known to have Humanist members. Furthermore, all of the known Humanist members come from Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations. Membership by way of donations and participation is healthy as reported by both Executive Directors I spoke with.<sup>69</sup> They additionally expressed an interest in including more Humanists. But other than the obvious outreach to UUs that has already been done, they were not sure how to find Humanists that would be interested in interfaith engagement.

Of the interfaith groups in Connecticut, I observed one group that had Humanists participating from the local UU congregation. There was a second interfaith group that was planning to vote on accepting a membership request from a Humanist that was not affiliated with any religious organization. This vote would prove to be momentous as it would require a bylaws change that currently requires all members to belong to a religious community. The Connecticut interfaith groups have memberships that are predominantly Christian but include Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, Baha'is, Zoroastrians,

---

<sup>68</sup> Arizona Interfaith Movement, "Faith Traditions," <http://www.interfaithmovement.com/> (accessed September 9, 2017).

<sup>69</sup> Conversations with The Interfaith Alliance Iowa and Colorado Executive Directors on January 10, 2017.

and Sikhs. If there was currently, or in the past, a Humanist member of any of the interfaith groups those Humanists came from UU congregations.

Secularism researcher Amanda Schutz created a typology of nonreligious events and organizations based on the development of distinctive characteristics and values. Schutz asserts that nonreligious organizations want to distinguish themselves from other similar groups, and do so by way of specific purposes and functions. The activities that exemplify the functions are held in six categories: communal, charitable, political, social, educational, and spiritual. People may assume that affiliation or membership in a nonreligious group is based on the purpose of criticizing religion but, as Schutz found, there is a diversity of beliefs among the nonreligious and organizational identity is not fixed.<sup>70</sup> The number of nonreligious organizations is growing and, therefore, differentiation among organizations is increasing as they seek to meet the needs and desires of potential members.

Hemant Mehta is the author of *I Sold My Soul on EBay*, a Patheos blogger, and an atheist activist. In my interview with Mehta, he conveyed an optimistic view that the Humanist movement is getting bigger and more political.<sup>71</sup> Mehta sees more interfaith groups reaching out to Humanists as the growing number of Nones becomes more visible and interfaith groups need the demographic. He shared an example of the Secular Student Alliance working with the Interfaith Youth Core and confirmed the idea that “young people are where it’s at.” What I find most inspiring about Mehta is his encouragement of Humanist groups to take what works in religious communities and adapt it to their own

---

<sup>70</sup> Ryan T. Cragun, Christel Manning, and Lori L. Fazzino, eds., *Organized Secularism in the United States: New Directions in Research* (Berlin: De Gruyter Publishing, 2017), 120.

<sup>71</sup> Conversation with Hemant Mehta on May 9, 2017.



settings. Mehta has traveled around the country sharing his message of what atheists can learn from religion. Alain de Botton writes about very similar ideas. He stresses that what really matters becomes more important and interesting when we can recognize that we invented religions “to serve two central needs which continue to this day...”<sup>72</sup> Those needs are to live in harmonious communities and to cope with life’s various pain and suffering. The message from both Mehta and Botton is controversial in many atheist circles but is a breath of fresh air for Humanists like myself and those who seek a congregational Humanism.

### **Faith-rooted Community Organizer Competency**

Site Team comment regarding my Faith-rooted Community Organizer competency: Although Rev. Kathleen has had no formal community organizing experience; she has shown the ability to inspire small groups to work for justice and peace in the community.

The Humanity Coalition is a project with two distinct fields of emphasis: cooperation among humanity, and coalition building. The ability to build coalitions is tied to my competency in the area of faith-rooted community organizing. My ministerial experience has been bringing people together around matters of unity but not specifically connected to community organizing. In order to work on this competency, I reached out to a ministerial colleague and community organizer in Connecticut. My colleague has contributed to the community organizing for social justice in Connecticut for over a decade. He shared with me the foundational idea behind faith-based community

---

<sup>72</sup> Alain de Botton, *Religion for Atheists: A Non-Believer's Guide to the Uses of Religion* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 12.

organizing is that congregation, communities, people are stronger together.<sup>73</sup> And he stressed the value of organizing that result in communities of interfaith, multicultural, all ages, all abilities, interracial, and LGBTQ identities. Successful programs and groups that have come out of community organizing in Connecticut have regularly been interfaith-based, although one of the most powerful groups no longer exists and the need for new leadership rises.

By familiarizing myself with the community organizing done by local Indivisible groups, and by attending a community organizing workshop led by the Planned Parenthood organization, I've come away with several key aims. Inviting community members who are impacted by the issue of focus, and identifying leaders from within that group of people is crucial. I realize that my natural ability to bring people together and help them see that they have abilities they didn't know they had, is a facet of organizing for community engagement. Based on the conversation with my colleague and awareness of my own personal capacities, consistently identifying and cultivating new leadership may be my biggest challenge. It has been a tremendous challenge in my work with the Yale Humanist Community (YHC), from Board of Directors recruitment to identifying and cultivating program volunteers. What I have found through work on The Humanity Coalition, in concert with YHC work, is that regularly checking in with community members to gauge needs and willingness to engage, along with my own capacity for flexibility is central to community organizing success.

I am impressed with the model and philosophy of faith-based PICO. The international organization maintains a belief in the potential for transformation of people,

---

<sup>73</sup> Conversation with a ministerial colleague on March 2, 2017.

institutions, and the larger culture.<sup>74</sup> This belief influences PICO's relationships with public officials and community members. It is precisely the potential for transformation that I envision through The Humanity Coalition and that I have witnessed through social justice campaigns organized by the Rev. Dr. William J. Barber of North Carolina.<sup>75</sup>

Barber has organized the Forward Together Moral Movement, also known as Moral Monday, and Poor People's Campaign: A National Call For Moral Revival. I attended the Moral Monday march and rally in Raleigh on February 8, 2014, and have followed the progress of the movement since then. My only disappointment with these faith-based community organizers and organizations is a lack of clearly articulated inclusion of Humanists.

Social justice is not something that most people associate with Humanism, or with people who identify as Humanist outside of Unitarian Universalism, but social issues have always been a part of Humanist philosophy. The call to champion flourishing and human rights for all is a call for justice. As faith-based community organizing focuses on issues of social justice it is wise to examine that topic within Humanist institutions as I consider my own level of competency in this area.

The American Humanist Association (AHA) has supported disenfranchised groups in society since the institution's inception in 1941, but a renewal of the commitment for advocacy has taken place. Executive Director Roy Speckhardt has said that in order to truly live out the humanist values of equality and justice, "we must also stand in solidarity with people of color, women and LGBTQ individuals whose rights,

---

<sup>74</sup> PICO National Network, <http://www.piconetwork.org> (accessed October 20, 2017).

<sup>75</sup> Repairers of the Breach, "Building A Moral Movement," <http://www.breachrepairers.org> (accessed October 20, 2017).

dignity and full humanity are sadly still disregarded in our society.”<sup>76</sup> In 2016, the AHA launched the Black Humanist Alliance and re-launched the Feminist Humanist Alliance and the LGBTQ Humanist Alliance. They also hired a social justice coordinator who is determined to highlight the overlooked diversity in the secular movement and ensure that all are given a voice. The AHA will host the Secular Social Justice 2018 Conference in Washington, DC, and I plan to be there.

Foundation Beyond Belief is not a community organizing entity in any traditional sense but it is an organization that seeks to unite Humanists through service and advocates for compassionate action throughout the world. The organization’s website claims “We are Humanism at Work” as their volunteer network boasts a collective of over one hundred and twenty-five secular organizations that serve the wider community through volunteering and charitable fundraising.<sup>77</sup> The Yale Humanist Community is a part of the network and that connection helps to motivate the portion of our mission that calls us to serve others. Social justice work is not limited to advocacy that involves marches, petition-signing, and displays of overt political action. Social justice is also about demonstrations of compassion and service that affirms the worth and dignity of all humanity. Social justice work is where shared values can be found among Humanists and religious adherents.

---

<sup>76</sup> Merrill Miller, “AHA Launches Initiatives for Racial Justice, Women’s Equality and LGBTQ Rights,” <https://americanhumanist.org/press-releases/2016-05-humanist-group-launches-initiatives-for-racial-justi/> (accessed June 1, 2017).

<sup>77</sup> Foundation Beyond Belief, “We are Humanism at Work,” <http://www.foundationbeyondbelief.org/> (accessed September 13, 2017).

## Values, Not Beliefs

The need for community connection among non-religious millennials is the topic of the *How We Gather* project.<sup>78</sup> Harvard colleagues conducted the research and authored the report that features ten organizations that millennials are currently engaging with. The Oasis Network is one of the ten featured and claims as one of its core values that people are more important than beliefs.<sup>79</sup> This is the heart of the awareness message that I have strived to communicate through my project and my ministry. If Humanists and religious adherents can agree that human beings are more important than theological explanations; if we can agree that the need for healing the planet overrides our disagreements; if we can agree that all human beings deserve dignity, care, and opportunity — then joining together becomes a valuable asset for social justice.

The concept of ethical living is not without arguments among groups that appear to be in opposition. Some atheists, whether Humanist-identified or not, accuse the religious of having to fear godly punishment or seek divine reward in order to be moral. Conversely, the religious have accused atheists of wholly lacking morality. There are multiple studies that back each of these unbalanced claims and confirmation bias is often used to add weight to such declarations.<sup>80</sup> This is precisely where an understanding of the difference between morals and values comes into play. Morals set apart right from wrong and are based on a system of belief that comes from culture, religion, or society. Morals

---

<sup>78</sup> Casper ter Kuile, “How We Gather – A New Report on Non-Religious Community,” *Sunday Assembly Blog*, April 29, 2015, <http://www.casptk.files.wordpress.com> (accessed June 1, 2017).

<sup>79</sup> Oasis Network, <http://www.peoplearemoreimportant.org> (accessed September 9, 2017).

<sup>80</sup> Confirmation bias is finding and using evidence that confirms one’s already existing worldview. In this context, I am referring specifically to groups who fit evidence into their world view while ignoring, or even falsely arguing vague data.

can vary depending on religion, culture, etc., and can be viewed as a practice of ethics. Values can be influenced by morals, as well as family and background. But values are defined by the individual. Personal values have been described as an internal reference for what is good and a determinate in behavior.<sup>81</sup>

Paul Chaffee of *The Interfaith Observer* spoke boldly about the value of “welcoming the non-theist community that has been a bugaboo for most religious folk, an easy scapegoat, rarely acknowledged, much less welcomed, into the larger religious community” because everyone is needed to do what needs to be done for humankind to survive, endure, and thrive.<sup>82</sup> Chaffee is not the only one with that viewpoint. The Interfaith Youth Core has done research with college students that shows 83% of over one thousand students surveyed from sixty colleges believe that many of the world’s major problems can be overcome if people of different religious and nonreligious perspectives work together.<sup>83</sup>

There is also a difference between values and beliefs. Beliefs are contextual assumptions that a person embraces as truth. Values are universal and are based on what is important to an individual. Neurobiologist and Nobel Prize winner Roger Sperry has asserted that human values can be viewed objectively as universal determinants in all

---

<sup>81</sup> Difference Between, “Difference between Morals and Values,” <http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/difference-between-morals-and-values/> (accessed August 5, 2017).

<sup>82</sup> Paul Chaffee, “Who Isn’t at the Table?” *The Interfaith Observer*, April 15, 2013, <http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/journal-articles/2013/4/15/who-isnt-at-the-table.html> (accessed January 23, 2018).

<sup>83</sup> M. J. Mayhew et al., “Emerging Interfaith Trends What College Students Are Saying About Religion in 2016,” <https://www.ifyc.org/sites/default/files/Final%20Emerging%20Trends%20Report.pdf> (accessed September 9 2017).

human decision-making.<sup>84</sup> Our deepest values are revealed by how we actually live our lives as those values provide insight and guide our decision-making. These deepest values were manifest in September, 2017, during hurricane relief efforts in Texas. Not only was on-the-ground assistance coming from religious organizations like the Salvation Army and Samaritan's Purse, but it also came from Houston Oasis, Humanists of Houston, South Texas Atheists for Reason, Beaumont Humanist Society, and Foundation Beyond Belief. What brings Humanists and religious adherents together in interfaith engagement is obviously not shared beliefs. What brings them together is shared values.

Father Carl Chudy is a Catholic priest with the Xaverian Missionaries, and a member of my Site Team. The Xaverian Missionaries are an international religious missionary congregation that sees exchanges between believers and non-believers as vital to the 21st century mission of the global Church. They began a dialogue and engagement project called Common Ground in 2012. Out of that project, and collaboration with Interfaith Scotland, the British Humanist Association and the Scottish Humanist Association, came a conference of dialogue between Humanists and religious adherents in 2013. It was the first international conference of its kind and was followed up two years later by a second conference at Rutgers University in New Jersey. The second conference was done in collaboration with the American Humanist Association. Part of the reasoning given by Father's Carl's group for organizing the Common Ground Project is that the gap between people of faith and the secular culture is not a new issue for the church. That gap calls for encounter and study "in the spirit of dialogue, love, and bridge

---

<sup>84</sup> Copthorne Macdonald, *The Role of Values in Wisdom*, The Wisdom Page, <http://www.wisdompage.com/roleofvalues.html> (accessed August 5, 2017).

building.”<sup>85</sup> We agree that the values of love and cooperation can be shared among Humanists and religious adherents.

Father Carl spoke at a YHC Humanist Haven Sunday gathering about seeking common ground through shared values and not beliefs. He expressed his view that in order to find meaningful connection between people who “view the world either through a religious or a non-religious prism,” we have to be honest about our differences and similarities, and clear as to why we seek common ground.<sup>86</sup> Both the Humanists and religious adherents in attendance found Father Carl’s perspective enlightening and encouraging. His message, and the response it generated, demonstrated that the relationship between Humanists and religious adherents in interfaith engagement is a growing aspiration for people who are focused on values, and people who value humanity over beliefs. Shared values provide the common ground needed for social justice commitment and connection.

---

<sup>85</sup> Xaverian Missionaries USA, “Religious and NonReligious Dialogue,” <https://www.xaverianmissionaries.org/religious-secular-dialogue/> (accessed October 11, 2017).

<sup>86</sup> Father Carl Chudy, “Non-Religious and Religious Engagement: Common Ground & Where it Can Lead,” *Patheos*, October 21, 2017, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/secularspectrum/2017/10/non-religious-religious-engagement-common-ground-can-lead/#48sBQwtVkhKMZ0A1.03> (accessed October 22, 2017).



## CHAPTER 5 PLAN

*In order to carry a positive action we must develop here a positive vision.*  
— Dalai Lama

### **Develop the Vision**

The primary outcome of my project is a vision plan. More specifically, the outcome is a Collaboration Vision Initiative (CVI) that lays out the initial steps to bring Humanists and religious adherents together for interfaith engagement. It is a plan that is designed for use by anyone with the interest, passion, and determination to be a part of the shift in interfaith engagement. After all, a hallmark of great leaders is that their vision includes big ideas.

Envisioning the plan was the first step in the process. There was no boilerplate for the CVI — no template to follow. Even though my decade's worth of work in congregational ministry provided a surplus of planning and organizing tools, a plan for The Humanity Coalition was something new and different. I began by spending some time contemplating the purpose of vision statements used by nonprofit organizations. Through conversation with a nonprofit consultant, I learned that the process of developing a vision statement consists of four steps: observe, reflect, write, and speak.<sup>87</sup> Although I was not looking to develop a vision statement, the described process is not unlike action research and I found it applicable to my development of the CVI. I observed the Humanists and religious adherents that participated in the awareness-raising

---

<sup>87</sup> Conversation with a business consultant July 1, 2017.

meetings, I reflected on my experiences with those groups, and then I set out to write with the input and feedback from those who supported the vision, and share the plan.

Vision is future-oriented. Vision statements define the optimal desired future state of what an organization wants to achieve over time, and provide guidance and inspiration as to what an organization is focused on achieving in future years. In developing the vision for my plan it was important to note that what may work today might not work in five years. My vision might seem big enough and broad enough to last a decade or more, but the fact is that we live in a fast-changing society that demands an eye for innovation in order to maintain relevancy.

Some evangelical Christian leaders are acknowledging the need and challenge to stay relevant even as church attendance is becoming increasingly irrelevant. Josh Daffern is a pastor who is concerned with the relevancy issue. Daffern believes the way that churches can stay relevant is first by developing an online presence that is customized for the cell phone as the average person touches their smartphone well over two thousand times a day.<sup>88</sup> Evangelical Christian leaders may focus on narrowly specified target content for their online presence, but I would submit that keeping the unaffiliated, and disaffiliated in mind is a worthy endeavor.

Additional ways include offering more than just a Sunday morning experience and offering multiple small group times so as not to eliminate the increasing amount of people who work on Sunday mornings. Andy Stanley, the Lead Pastor for the North Point

---

<sup>88</sup> Josh Daffern, "7 Ways the Church Can Stay Relevant in a World Where It's Becoming Increasingly Irrelevant," *New Wineskins*, May 31, 2017, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/newwineskins/7-ways-church-can-stay-relevant-world-becoming-increasingly-irrelevant/> (accessed July 15, 2017).

Church in Atlanta, reminds the local church that every innovation has an expiration date.

He says,

At some point, new isn't new anymore, regardless of what the package says. Eventually, new ideas feel like yesterday's news. Bread is not the only thing that gets stale over time. Every new and innovative approach to ministry has an expiration date as well. Every single one. Nothing is irresistible or relevant forever.<sup>89</sup>

### **Teamwork Does Makes the Dream Work**

Developing the CVI required creation of a Consultant Team to offer perspective and feedback. While considering criteria for selection of team members I knew that there were five key areas of expertise that needed coverage: young adult representation, interfaith perspective, Humanist identity, social media user, and experience in progressive religious education. I had initially thought I would create a team of five people with each one fulfilling one of the stated expertise areas. That is not how things worked out.

I reached out to six individuals who met the criteria I had established. Of the six, four responded and three were willing to be involved with the project. The Consultant Team consisted of a Director of Religious Education at a Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregation in Connecticut, a Humanist who served as a national leader of the UU Humanist movement and supports the Humanist group at Harvard University, and a recent college grad who uses social media and identifies as a UU. Yes, all three team members are connected to Unitarian Universalism, but all three are also interested in interfaith engagement, either identify as a Humanist or are familiar with Humanism, and thought the project was valuable.

---

<sup>89</sup> Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Kindle loc. 3114-3117.

After initial contact I arranged a video chat with each team member to further explain the project and set out expectations for their involvement. The expectations included two more video chats, email correspondence, ideas for the CVI based on their expertise and experience, feedback on a draft version of the plan, and agreement on the final version. The team did not meet together as it was not a necessary part of the involvement. Sadly, one team member was unreachable after commenting on the draft version and the official team was down to two members. Fortunately, I had two members of my Site Team that were able to review the draft and offer helpful feedback.

Almost immediately into the CVI development, and in preliminary conversations with the Consultant Team members, I realized that one of the most important pieces of the plan would be an Agreement of Right Relations. The concept of “right relationship” seems to come out of the 18th century Quaker tradition and was originally defined as our well-being is connected with the well-being of others. A more current description of the concept is regularly used by environmentalists like Jasmine Wallace who says, “Right Relationship is being aware that what we think and what we do determines our world and what is in it. It involves the knowledge that there is no such thing as separation...”<sup>90</sup>

Within the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), both in individual congregations and throughout the institution, right relations are referred to in terms of covenant. The word “covenant” originates from the Latin *convenire* — convene, or come together. The UUA defines covenant as a solemn agreement or promise from the heart

---

<sup>90</sup> Certified Naturally Grown, “Gaia Greenhouse Enterprises, LLC,” <https://certified.naturallygrown.org/producers/4166> (accessed October 22, 2017).

regarding a course of action between parties.<sup>91</sup> The source for this type of use of the word covenant is the story, in the Hebrew Scriptures, of the relationship between Yahweh and Abraham and his descendants. Covenant is accepted as an explicitly religious word and, with that in mind, I decided to use a simpler and more inclusive word: agreement. Agreement denotes harmony and a negotiated arrangement between parties as to a course of action.

The Agreement of Right Relations puts relationships at the center of attention. It takes seriously the proposition that relationships are of central importance to human life. In their book *Practicing Right Relationship*, authors Mary Sellon and Daniel Smith say, “Without relationship, we perish.”<sup>92</sup> Sellon and Smith affirm my own personal experience that human beings long for our relationships to be positive and want them to connect us with other people in a life-giving way. Our relationships connect us to one another and let us know we are not alone. Again, the idea of connection weaves its way through my project.

The CVI would highlight an Agreement of Right Relations; describing it in the following way:

The term “right relations” refers to a healthy and thoughtful way of being in community with one another. An agreement of right relations seeks to help create an atmosphere of respect, trust, compassion, and gratitude. It is a set of guidelines whose purpose is served through respectful communication when engaging in dialogue and action, and is meant to help reduce the risk of misunderstanding, hurt, and conflict that can occur when people speak passionately about subjects important to them. To this

---

<sup>91</sup> Unitarian Universalist Association, “Covenant of Right Relations,” <http://www.uua.org/safe/covenant> (accessed October 22, 2017).

<sup>92</sup> Mary Sellon and Dan Smith, *Practicing Right Relationship: Skills for Deepening Purpose, Finding Fulfillment, and Increasing Effectiveness in Your Congregation* (Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2005), 4.

end all people involved in The Humanity Coalition Project recognize and agree to abide by an agreement of right relations.<sup>93</sup>

The seven points of agreement include refraining from proselytizing, assuming good intentions, and regarding others as colleagues. The Consultant Team concurred that an Agreement of Right Relations was a necessary component of the CVI. The full agreement can be found in the Appendix E of this paper.

### **Social Media Research**

Political revolutions are started with a Facebook post, online support communities garner thousands of participants, and the possibilities for connection and service across the globe are plentiful. So how is social media being utilized to further community-building and how are social justice issues being engaged through technology? These are the questions that needed examination for my project and the answers would be important for the CVI.

Technology and the use of social media in churches is a source of disagreement and tension. To be more specific, it's most often the use of new technology and social media during traditional worship services that creates the most tension. But it's also a source of angst for some people when it involves video chat meetings, having a church Facebook group and Twitter feed, going digital with newsletters, and spending money on updating websites. Granted, attitudes are changing but they're not keeping up with how the community outside of the church is changing with regard to use of technology and social media.

The reason given for the angst or outright rejection of social media is lack of face-to-face contact. This fact does bear some merit, although the growing number of video

---

<sup>93</sup> See Appendix E.

phone calls and online meetings in both personal and professional life is addressing that contact issue on some level. I served congregations where the tension was frequently a topic of board discussions and I came to understand that a lack of knowledge and experience with technology and social media was the impetus for the anxiety. Lynne M. Baab highlights the common tension in the church in regards to new technology and social networking: “It is no accident that many of the negative articles about Facebook and Twitter are written by people who don’t use them.”<sup>94</sup>

Just a few people practiced and brought their religious practice online as early as the mid-1980s, when individuals with early internet networking connections brought their spirituality into online discussion forums.<sup>95</sup> But just ten years ago, seeing people use their phones in church was unthinkable. Phones are now used for so much more than just making phone calls. Mobile devices allow users to listen to sermons at home, and read biblical texts anywhere, anytime. Ryan Torma and Paul Emerson Teusner write, “Others can use their iPhones as meditative device to prepare for Confession by creating a digital log of their sins and then bring their iPhones to the confessional.”<sup>96</sup> That’s not exactly something Humanists would be interested in but phones are being used to download all kinds of inspirational content, and connect people to their religious community through mobile device-friendly newsletters and websites. Founder of the first-ever Christian and faith-based social media platform says social media connects religion to younger

---

<sup>94</sup> Lynne M. Baab, *Friending: Real Relationships in a Virtual World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2011), 50.

<sup>95</sup> Heidi A. Campbell, ed., *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 5.

<sup>96</sup> Ryan Torma and Paul Emerson Teusner, “iReligion,” *Studies in World Christianity* 17, no. 2 (August 2011): 143, November 4, 2012, <http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/swc.2011.0017>.

generations with prayer apps, the ability to share amazing experiences, find and build online relationships with other Christians, and showcase faith-based talents through YouTube.<sup>97</sup> Technology has come a long way in a relatively short period of time.

Social networks are the most useful tool for realizing the benefits of the internet. They host individual content, video, blogs, photos, status, and search technology. Social networks are used to recruit, organize, and remind. The benefit applies to both Humanist and religious groups. Hemant Mehta is convinced that the growing Humanist movement is due to growing awareness made possible through the internet and online communities. He asserts that most Humanist communities are online via Facebook and Reddit.<sup>98</sup> The internet is a vital domain for communication and connection among secularists. The remarkable benefit of the internet is outreach and community building. As online relationships become more prominent in the lives of those who take part, the definitions and parameters for concepts like “community” change. Members of groups who interact online tend to refer to themselves as communities, and for those seeking community, what is found online can be genuine; granting a significant sense of place.

Recent research on organized secularism acknowledges the Internet as an influential resource for individuals and groups in the U.S. over the past decade.<sup>99</sup> Secularists use the Internet to find community and engage in outreach or activism. What’s fascinating is that online communities often transform into face-to-face

---

<sup>97</sup> WRN Editorial Staff, “5 Ways Social Media Connects Religion to Younger Generations,” *World Religion News*, July 3, 2015, <http://www.worldreligionnews.com/religion-news/christianity/5-ways-social-media-connects-religion-to-younger-generations> (accessed June 1, 2017).

<sup>98</sup> Reddit is an American social news aggregation, web content rating, and discussion website. Members can submit content to the site and that content is when voted up or down by other members.

<sup>99</sup> Cragun, Manning, and Fazzino, *Organized Secularism in the United States*, 137.



communities. Researcher Aislinn Addington found that “the simple act of being part of a Facebook group, listserv, or passive member of a national organization could easily open the door to myriad opportunities for participation and community building.”<sup>100</sup>

John Radoff posits technology has a unique platform for interconnectedness. He explains that social networks address the possibility of technology’s isolating impact by providing a venue for social interaction.<sup>101</sup> Networks like Facebook replace some of the physical meeting places once relied upon. They can be accessed asynchronously, enabling satisfaction of social contact need whenever desired. The platform of interconnectedness is built into social networking sites like Facebook, and although something will eventually replace Facebook, people will continue to connect through social media.

When it comes to social justice and activism, YouTube and blogs have become an important part of secularist culture as they promote a highly personalized mode of presentation. Researchers Cimino and Smith have observed that “traditional skeptical organizations are no longer the default leaders of the popular movement because secular activism online is coming from the bottom up.”<sup>102</sup> A look into the #Occupy movement proves this point. Websites and other digital tools such as listservs expedited the spread of the global justice movement and heightened their scale of operation by improving communication and coordination among activists across the globe. In fact, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook became the primary means of communication with #Occupy.

---

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>101</sup> Jon Radoff, *Game On: Energize Your Business with Social Media Games* (Indianapolis: Wiley, 2011), 27.

<sup>102</sup> Richard Cimino and Christopher Smith, *Atheist Awakening: Secular Activism & Community In America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 108.

The use of Twitter and Facebook can also produce a sense of connectedness, potentially eliciting powerful feelings of solidarity as users read about distant and not-so-distant others engaged in the same or kindred actions. The technology of smartphones is also essential in social justice activism; allowing individuals to continually post and receive updates as well as to circulate images, video, and text, constituting real-time user-generated news feeds.<sup>103</sup>

Billy Shore's blog post about the intersection of social media and social justice brought out a salient point regarding the value of that intersection. The post focused on Michael Harrington, author of *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* published in 1962. Harrington talked about how the poor are invisible. Shore stressed that with instant access to information the poor no longer have to be invisible. "The internet brings the opportunity to learn and know how other people live across town and across the world. With that comes a responsibility to engage as a citizen, locally and globally, in new and more powerful ways."<sup>104</sup> Social media can't ensure social justice. But it can affect the invisibility that is the first barrier to achieving it.

The benefits of technology and social media usage far outweigh the downside when it comes to community-building and engaging social justice activism. I agree with the many community leaders, both secular and religious, who say you can't build community today without technology. Peter Bowden was mentioned in an earlier chapter of this paper and his work is worth mentioning here. Peter is a Unitarian Universalist

---

<sup>103</sup> Jeffrey S. Juris, "Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social media, public space, and emerging logics of aggregation," *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 2 (2012): 267.

<sup>104</sup> Billy Shore, "When Social Media and Social Justice Intersect," *The Huffington Post*, May 25, 2011, [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/billy-shore/when-social-media-and-soc\\_b\\_231018.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/billy-shore/when-social-media-and-soc_b_231018.html) (accessed August 25, 2017).

media innovator who specializes in helping congregations communicate, build community, and have a greater impact in the world through digital communication.<sup>105</sup> He offers social media training and an online course about using social media for membership growth. This is the work that is needed and slowly becoming a priority in UU circles. It is training and knowledge being utilized by some Humanist groups through resources other than Peter.

In 1893, interreligious dialogue was born during the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Religious leaders and theologians of differing faith traditions came together in what was the first formal communication of interreligious dialogue. The aim was not to proselytize. It was to offer introduction, information, and create more awareness. That communication continues today but the platforms for the dialogue have changed. The internet is an important domain for communication and connection. It is the twenty-first century meeting space.

### **Professional Competency**

My Site Team remarked on my professional competency with affirmation that I am recognized for excellence in communication and personable relations with others. But the Team also noted that further development of my self-awareness in the ability to say “no” when necessary, deal constructively with conflict, and practice self-care was important. A need to continue development in technological competency was also noted.

The social media research I conducted became a part of the professional competency addressed through my project. The most valuable tools I engaged in this area

---

<sup>105</sup> UU Planet, <http://www.uuplanet.org> (accessed August 25, 2017).

were workshops and online trainings through the Zoom online meeting platform.<sup>106</sup> I purchased a usage plan, and began using the online meeting option on a regular basis. The live trainings are offered weekly and cover basic Zoom usage, hosting webinars, and utilizing breakout rooms. I also availed myself of the recorded video tutorials which cover the same topics and additional, more in-depth topics such as integration and branding. YouTube and Facebook Live are two more social media programs that I have explored and used with some success.

Through my work at Claremont Lincoln University (CLU) I am honing additional technological skills with the online learning platform known as Canvas.<sup>107</sup> With this program I am uploading weekly videos, facilitating online discussion boards, tracking student grades, and communicating with students. CLU presented an unexpected opportunity for learning and professional development during the school's Fall Gathering where I was asked to represent the Interfaith Action faculty by presenting my doctorate project research. The challenge of the request was twofold. First, I had to gear the presentation to the theme of overcoming obstacles. Second, and definitely more difficult, the presentation was to be a PechaKucha format.<sup>108</sup> The format is not conducive to qualitative research as images, rather than text, is called for. Having just twenty seconds of narration for each of the twenty slides was the biggest challenge of all. There was some room for an additional slide and a few additional seconds. All in all, the process

---

<sup>106</sup> Zoom Video Communications is a San Jose based company that provides remote conferencing services using cloud computing.

<sup>107</sup> Canvas is an open-source learning management system launched in 2011. It's used by more than 3,000 universities, institutions, and school districts around the world.

<sup>108</sup> PechaKucha is a precise simple presentation format developed in Tokyo, in 2003. The Japanese word that translates as chit chat. The presentation style is 20 slides shown for 20 seconds each with coordinated narration.

was creative and stimulating. I was so inspired by the format that I incorporated it into my project and will elaborate on that in an upcoming chapter.

In the matter of self-awareness mentioned by my Site Team, I went back to the positive psychology studies that I had participated in when I received my Applied Positive Psychology certification.<sup>109</sup> In addition to re-reading materials and re-engaging in written exercises, I met with a Positive Psychology coach on several occasions over the course of my project work. The coaching sessions offered me opportunities to further develop my self-awareness as it related to self-care and relationship strength. I've used the principles of positive psychology throughout my project in the ways that I have presented information, handled my disappointments, and maintained enthusiasm.

I took a short online course in positive humanism before beginning my project and recently revisited the course materials, which are largely based in the precepts of positive psychology. I can see implications for usage of positive psychology in future work with The Humanity Coalition project.

### **The Collaborative Vision Initiative Comes to life**

Once the initial research was done and the Consultant Team was in place, it was time to assemble the CVI. I decided to start with a purpose statement. This is different from a mission statement, which is a description of what business an organization is in and who it caters to. A mission statement is typically used as a way to provide focus for the organization's management. A purpose statement is motivational and, as Harvard Business Review described, "Connects with the heart as well as the head...a

---

<sup>109</sup> I received certification from The Flourishing Center in New York City. Positive psychology uses research from neuroscience, mindfulness, and contemplative studies to help people flourish in their lives.

philosophical heartbeat.”<sup>110</sup> I chose the following purpose statement: *Establish an inclusively collective voice for the flourishing of humanity and human rights by bringing interfaith and humanist communities together to collaborate on local issues of social justice.*

In addition to the Agreement of Right Relations cited in the previous chapter, the CVI includes some general guidelines for the project, an Exploration Plan, and helpful next-step ideas and reminders. The guidelines contain working definitions of Humanism and interfaith, call for utilization of technology, discuss the importance of proper project leadership, and emphasizes the significance of leading with values as opposed to beliefs. The Exploration Plan is intended as a step-by-step plan based on my experiences in presenting information to Humanist and interfaith groups in the awareness-raising phase of the project. The Plan can easily be replicated and done anywhere there are willing Humanist and interfaith groups.

An initial conversation that outlined my vision for the CVI was discussed with the Consultant Team. From those conversations I took the ideas from each consultant and incorporated them into the CVI. Those ideas included a particular focus on connecting with young adults, inclusion of Humanist resources, defining and describing both Humanism and interfaith, and explaining the purpose of the project. Once a draft was completed I requested feedback from the Consultants and some members of my Site Team.

---

<sup>110</sup> Graham Kenny, “Your Company’s Purpose is not Its Vision, Mission, or Values,” *Harvard Business Review*, September 3, 2014, <https://hbr.org/2014/09/your-companys-purpose-is-not-its-vision-mission-or-values>.

The young adult consultant expressed satisfaction at seeing the Agreement of Right Relations and considered how it might be particularly relevant when youth and young adults would be working with elders. While asking participants to agree to regard each other as colleagues makes sense for people who are close in age and life experience, she suggested that another word be added that could more appropriately apply to a situation where participants were generations apart in age and experience. Based on her suggestion I chose to add the word teammate.

The subjects of social media and the intentional inclusion of young people were extremely important to this consultant. She mentioned that the uses of many different forms of communication, as opposed to just one or two, are important in getting information disseminated to her peers. She also shared that in her own religious community it seems as though the young adults are an afterthought and are not viewed as a valuable resource as they are not often physically present. The result of her feedback was inclusion of a plea to consider ways to include all ages, and to utilize every communication venue possible, including social media platforms.

The religious educator consultant was equally pleased about the Agreement of Right Relations and confirmed the importance of working definitions of the words Humanism and interfaith. Working in a religious community that includes Humanists, and having experience with various interfaith activities in the wider community, the consultant stressed the importance of emphasizing a local focus. I was able to incorporate this feedback in the general guidelines by suggesting that being aware of the most pressing local social justice issues is a good way to narrow the focus of engagement.

This consultant felt strongly about three additional items I had not given any consideration. The first was parents of young children and how use of technology could be an effective way to engage them. I had been thinking strictly about young adults when it came to technology and social media. I made a point of naming “busy parents who might otherwise not be able to participate” in the general guidelines section referring to the utilization of technology. The second item was accessibility. She voiced a concern for accessibility of language and ability and I made sure to include a request to be mindful of accessibility issues. The final item had to do with awareness on the part of the presenter at initial meetings with Humanist and interfaith groups. The consultant shared her own struggle as an introvert and recommended that presenters be advised to ensure enough time for more introverted participants to add to the discussion or offer questions. I added her recommendation and went a step further by suggesting that contact information be collected from participants who would be willing to discuss the presentation experience privately, at a later date.

Two of my Site Team members offered feedback and both were focused on the need for an explanation of how the project, through the CVI, would be helpful to those involved. One member explained that it might not be enough to simply state that collaboration between Humanists and religious adherents was a good idea. What I heard from the Site Team was that it was important to be more specific about why the collaboration was imperative. From that feedback I added a paragraph immediately following the purpose statement: *With so much divisiveness in society, along with a tremendous need for attention to social justice issues that impact all of our lives, coming together with a focus on shared values is paramount. Too often good intentions and*



*stalwart efforts by individual interfaith, religious, or Humanist groups become isolated and have limited impact. Combining efforts and collaborating on projects that better the wider community can make a significant difference in the lives of both those who give and those who receive.*

The CVI is a plan to be used in the initial stages of gauging interest in collaboration, and in setting the stage for Humanist and religious adherent engagement in interfaith action. That is what The Humanity Coalition is all about. Establishing an inclusively collective voice for the flourishing of humanity and human rights by bringing together disparate groups such as religious adherents and Humanists to collaborate on social justice issues is the purpose of this work. It demonstrates a call for inclusiveness and collaboration that is necessary as the interfaith landscape begins to shift. The shift moves away from the outdated model of ecumenical collegiality, predictable mainstream religious professional leadership, and toleration of beliefs. It moves toward broader engagement, leadership, and mission. There is no guarantee that collaboration will happen and that engagement will be successful. The CVI is simply a plan based on a vision of putting people before beliefs, uniting around shared values, and focusing on the local issues that impact religious and non-religious people. As the Dalai Lama has declared, “In order to carry a positive action we must develop here a positive vision.”

## CHAPTER 6 CELEBRATION

*The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react.”*  
— George Bernard Shaw

*If not you, who? If not now, when?*  
— Rabbi Hillel

*You must do the thing you think you cannot do*  
— Eleanor Roosevelt

*When nothing is sure, everything is possible.*  
— Margaret Drabble

### **Imagine the Possibilities**

This chapter title, *Celebration*, may be a bit misleading. The final goal of my project was to share my research and completed Collaboration Vision Initiative with interested people at an unveiling event. At first, I imagined a soiree in a rented venue with catered food, hired musicians providing background music, and special guests both in person and via video. Yes, it would be a grand celebration. But that’s not how it happened. As my project shifted from the original proposal where I would open an affiliate office of the Interfaith Alliance organization, to an unknown and organically grown plan for possibility, I felt uncertain that there would be much to celebrate. How would I celebrate the unknown and intangible? In order to discern a new vision, I immersed myself in a daily centering practice of reading inspirational quotes, journaling, and meditative chanting. The four quotes that open this chapter became my touchstones during that time of discernment.

My process for approaching the final project goal began with taking George Bernard Shaw's words to heart. The possibilities for the project, and usage of the CVI, were numerous *only* if I decided not to react to my fears and uncertainty. Instead, I needed to act. I asked myself the questions of Rabbi Hillel. If not me, then who would share my research and the potential of this project? And if I didn't do it now, when would I ever do it? A review of all the experiences I had encountered during the project process unearthed the realization that I would do well to follow the results of my own research and utilize technology for the unveiling. There were a few options that included going back to each group I had spoken to and do a celebration presentation, have one central meeting place and invite others to attend via video, record a video presentation and send it out, or offer a live webinar. With consideration given to time involved, I ultimately decided to do a webinar through the Zoom platform.

I had already participated in a workshop on Zoom webinars but I hadn't actually hosted a webinar. The fear of failure was real and I can imagine that it is that same fear that keeps some religious communities from employing technology and social media more fully. Eleanor Roosevelt's words rang like a bell in the back of my head: *You must do the thing you think you cannot do*. I had already let people know there would be some kind of celebration and follow-up in October, so I set the date accordingly. I also spent time in conversation with a Zoom consultant to be sure I knew what I hoped I knew from the workshops and tutorials I had participated in, and was able to do a test run.

The key to a good webinar is one that is short enough to keep the participants' attention and just long enough to disseminate the information of focus and answer

questions from the audience.<sup>111</sup> The Humanity Coalition celebration webinar was forty-five minutes in length, with five minutes of introduction and instructions on using the chat feature, twenty minutes of information on my research and project, and fifteen minutes for questions.

The webinar seemed a perfect place to use the PechaKucha-style presentation I had created for Claremont Lincoln University. It was just under 8 minutes in length and would give viewers all of the general project information that was needed before sharing the CVI. It would also produce an appealing visual aspect and variety to the webinar format. I would use a screen sharing feature to highlight the CVI. Additionally, I made sure to set up the chat feature for questions, and set up my home office so as to have an appealing backdrop for the portions of the webinar where I was speaking to my audience.

All of the group leaders I had connected with in the awareness-raising phase were sent email invitations, as well as my Site Team, the Humanist and interfaith leaders I had interviewed, and a half dozen other people I thought would be interested in seeing the webinar.<sup>112</sup> The invitation was sent two and a half weeks ahead of the event and I requested that group leaders share the information with their all of their group members, whether or not they had participated in the surveys, discussions, and round table meetings.

### **Unveiling the Plan**

I was able to host the webinar in my home office on a quiet weekday evening and was feeling much more confident then when I had started the planning. It did seem that

---

<sup>111</sup> Conversation with ZOOM webinar consultant on September 19, 2017.

<sup>112</sup> See Appendix F.

celebration was in order. But even with a test run three weeks earlier, and a quick test two hours before the start time, the technology failed. Technology failure is another fear that is real and can deter people from fully employing technology in their religious community or organization. Because of what turned out to be an unusual network outage, I was unable to host the complete webinar on the intended night. I rescheduled for the following evening at the same time. I will never know how many people were on the original webinar as compared to the number on the rescheduled webinar but I'm fairly certain the change negatively impacted participation.

While the number of viewers was less than I had hoped for, the webinar went smoothly, the PechaKucha-style presentation was a hit, the viewers thought the CVI would be a helpful and useful tool, and the questions asked were thoughtful. I was able to present my research again the following month when I was invited to speak to a large Humanist group whose members had participated in the earlier surveys online.<sup>113</sup> This invitation was an unexpected gift as it offered me an opportunity to present and take questions in person. Having the experience of both a webinar and an in-person meeting was valuable. I was reminded of the need to not limit avenues of communication.

I admit to celebrating when the unveiling was done. But the true celebration lies in the possibilities ahead. One of the challenges with my project is that the research doesn't offer a proven solution and the big picture is unknown. My project is a seed planting. Even with proper nourishment and care, seeds don't always produce the results desired. The uncertainty is a challenge, and the exciting part of the challenge is the

---

<sup>113</sup> Meeting with The Humanist Association of Connecticut on November 20, 2017.

possibilities that can sprout from that seed. It is as English novelist Margaret Drabble has said, “*When nothing is sure, everything is possible.*”

NYTS professor, Dr. Keith Russell encouraged my cohort to “create a parable of possibility” when considering our project.<sup>114</sup> When I consider The Humanity Coalition and the creation of a parable of possibility I think about a village of people who live side-by-side but are mostly unaware of each other. Each household has a small garden built on a foundation of their own sense of religious beliefs, philosophy, and spiritual practice. Each household tries to do their part to improve the ethical issues in the village by planting tiny seeds of justice in their personal garden. But no one household is able to make a great impact with their tiny seeds. It is only when one person decides to step out of their own garden and talk with their neighbors that things begin to change. One by one, people begin to look beyond their difference of beliefs and focus on the values they share with one another. Slowly, the focus on values leads to cooperation and collaboration on those ethical issues. A large village garden is seeded and the impact is deep and lasting, not unlike a few new friendships among neighbors.

## **Phase II**

Phase II of my project holds tremendous possibilities. There are some scheduled to happen in 2018, and others that are more general and without specific plans. An exciting possibility on the calendar is the Reimagining Interfaith Cooperation conference taking place in July, 2018, at George Washington University.<sup>115</sup> Yale Humanist Community plans to be a co-sponsor of the event and will be the only Humanist

---

<sup>114</sup> Conversation in NYTS class in October 2015, led by Dr. Keith Russell.

<sup>115</sup> Reimagine Interfaith Leadership, <http://www.reimagineinterfaith.org> (accessed Dec. 3, 2017).

organization formally participating. Co-sponsorship affords the opportunity to work on program planning and offer a workshop on the inclusion of Humanists in interfaith engagement. The Reimaging Interfaith Cooperation conference will offer six program tracks, an interfaith public action event, and the 2018 International Association of Religious Freedom world congress will take place. Expected attendance is around four hundred, with a special concentration of young adults.

The next Parliament of the World Religions is taking place in October, 2018, in Toronto.<sup>116</sup> Here is another opportunity to represent Humanism at an interfaith conference. Site Team member, Father Carl Chudy, and I plan to submit a workshop proposal for the conference. The workshop will have some focus on the connection, cooperation, and or collaboration of Humanists and religious adherents. Having experienced the Parliament in 2015, I am anxious to return and expand the awareness of conference attendees. This event is much larger than the Reimaging Interfaith Cooperation conference with expected attendance at five thousand.

One of the most interesting revelations that has surfaced while exploring Phase II is the international scope of my developing interfaith-related ministry. Along with the two aforementioned 2018 international conferences, my teaching at CLU includes international students. As well, the YHC Board of Directors has a Director located in China, and plans to create a more visible online presence in 2018 that may generate international interest.

Local possibilities are also abundant and I plan to approach Phase II with the organization of an endeavor I call Common Threads. This is an interfaith event centered

---

<sup>116</sup> Parliament of World Religions, <http://parliamentofreligions.org/parliament/2018-toronto/toronto-2018> (accessed Nov. 15, 2017).

on handcrafting — knitting and crocheting. The idea is to bring together various knitting ministries in the greater New Haven area, along with interested Yale students and Humanists, to spend several hours together creating warm hats for area homeless shelters and premie blankets for local neonatal intensive care units. This type of ministry is not new to me. In each congregation I served since 2004, I initiated a knitting outreach ministry. In a few circumstances there would be participants from outside of the congregation. Common Threads will be my first foray into an intentionally interfaith knitting project. Some of the initial groundwork has been done for this event, including interest and possible space from both a local Catholic church and a Unitarian Universalist congregation. My hope is to host this event in early 2019, with similar events in other locations in Connecticut later that year. With connections made through the awareness-raising process, with Connecticut interfaith and Humanist groups, Common Threads is poised for success.

Phase II possibilities also include a number of partner relationships with organizations in both the interfaith and Humanist fields. My already established connections with The Interfaith Alliance and Claremont Lincoln University (CLU) may provide opportunities for collaboration that go beyond Connecticut. In the January term at CLU I will be teaching Interfaith Leadership in a Global Context, described as

Exploring the impact of transformative leadership through the work of celebrated interfaith, social, and political leaders and their response to practicing the Golden Rule, promoting social justice, grassroots organizing, and interfaith cooperation within multiple contexts.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup> Claremont Lincoln University, “Interfaith Leadership in a Global Context,” <http://www.claremontlincoln.edu/programs/interfaith-action/#courses> (accessed Nov. 22, 2017).



There is a direct connection with my teaching at CLU and The Humanity Coalition project as I approach courses from a Humanist perspective and am able to submit Humanist resources when appropriate.

The Secular Student Alliance and Interfaith Youth Core are student-focused organizations that not only connect to my work with Yale Humanist community, but also relate to my project by way of interfaith engagement. I foresee the possibilities of working with these two organizations through the Yale Humanist Community to involve more students in the process of collaboration and cooperation. This may take the form of special events or an ongoing dialogue opportunity.

My relationship with the Yale University Chaplain's Office is yet another venue of possibility for The Humanity Coalition. To date, that office has supported the work of Yale Humanist Community but has not recognized Humanism as a valid partner for official interfaith engagement. The reason given for denial of a 2012 application for inclusion in the Yale Religious Ministries council is that Humanism is not a religion. I hold out hope that awareness-raising can be done in this regard and that collaboration and deeper cooperation is possible.

The final area of possibility for Phase II of The Humanity Coalition is with Humanist chaplain colleagues across the country. Aside from myself, there are Humanist chaplains currently serving students from the following schools: American University, Harvard, Rutgers, University of Southern California, Tufts, Columbia, University of Central Florida, New York University, and Stanford.<sup>118</sup> Some chaplaincies include an assistant chaplain or intern. To my knowledge, these chaplains have not gathered together

---

<sup>118</sup> Humanist Chaplaincies, <http://www.humanistchaplaincies.org> (accessed on Nov. 22, 2017).

as a group for support or to share best practices. I would like to create an online gathering for chaplains and together consider simultaneous events on our campuses that would highlight collaboration between Humanist and religious students. This creation will begin with a year of establishing relationships with Humanist chaplain colleagues, and seeking a partner organization such as the Humanist Institute to assist with networking and facilitation. I anticipate that an established online gathering could be launched in early 2019.

Existentialist philosopher Soren Kierkegaard said, “If I were to wish for anything, I should not wish for wealth and power, but for the passionate sense of the potential, for the eye which, ever young and ardent, sees the possible. Pleasure disappoints, possibility never.”<sup>119</sup> It is with this wish for the passionate sense of the potential, and the eye that sees the possible, that I celebrate The Humanity Coalition and begin to breathe life into the next phase of this project.

---

<sup>119</sup> Soren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life*, ed. Victor Eremita (New York: Penguin, 1992), 56.

## CHAPTER 7 EVALUATION

*Everything that is done in the world is done by hope.*  
— Martin Luther

### **Embrace the Experience**

The evaluation process most useful and appropriate for gauging the success of The Humanity Coalition project is survey data and feedback. Within this chapter I will also bring my personal experience with various aspects of the project to the evaluation.

#### **Goal 1:**

*Raise awareness of the missing humanist participation in interfaith communities by engaging in an outreach campaign to CT Humanists and conducting round table discussions with religious leaders involved in interfaith dialogue and action.*

Meetings with Humanists and religious adherents took place and questionnaire surveys were administered through the meetings and online. In the project proposal, I set out to survey twenty-five Humanists and twenty-five religious adherents. Because I offered an online option, I wound up with a total of fifty-three Humanist participants and thirty-six religious adherent participants.<sup>120</sup> The evaluation criterion for Goal 1 was set at a 75% survey return rate. The return rate for in-person surveys was 100%. It is impossible to gauge a return rate on online participation as it is possible that there were some people who viewed the presentation and did not participate in the survey process.

---

<sup>120</sup> See Appendix D.

While the return rate was better than anticipated, the in-person interaction was lacking. Only ten of the fifty-three Humanist participants were at an in-person presentation. The religious adherents were mostly in-person participants with just eleven of the thirty-six engaging through the online option. The disparity in participation is striking. The overall survey results are encouraging and positive but I am disheartened that the majority of Humanist participation was not live and fully interactive. I can't help but question whether or not that fact impacted the results in some way.

The results of the surveys showed that in the pre- and post- questionnaires the answers from both groups are very similar. The only areas of appreciable difference in the first survey are the awareness of the other group's presence in Connecticut, and the number of people who have engaged in an interfaith dialogue that included Humanists. Just under half of the Humanists were aware of organized interfaith groups while only one third of the religious adherents were aware of any Humanist groups. Twenty percent of the Humanist participants had ever engaged in interfaith dialogue. Nearly half of the religious adherents indicated that they had participated in interfaith dialogue where the Humanist voice was present, although I'm not convinced this is completely reliable data as the understanding of Humanism was very limited. In the second survey, taken after the presentation, there was little difference in the results from each group. There were slightly more religious adherents than Humanists who said that their thoughts on shared values had changed or expanded as a result of the presentation.

In the pre-presentation survey, groups were asked to name possible shared values between themselves and the other group. Both the religious adherents and Humanists listed care for the environment and helping the less fortunate by alleviating hunger and

poverty as top priorities. The Humanists also focused on broad values such as serving the greater good and living by the Golden Rule. In the post-presentation survey, when asked what issues would be appropriate for a collaboration project between groups, anti-racism, care of the environment, refugees, and immigration were the primary answers received from both groups. Yet, with these answers and a highly positive tone in all the survey answers, there are two or three participants from each group that denoted their unwillingness to work together in interfaith community action. Unfortunately, I did not receive specific reasoning from all five who were unwilling, but one from the religious adherents and two from the Humanists made a point to state that their unwillingness was based on not having the time to engage.

There were several comments made on the surveys that provided insight into past experiences of the participants and/or the future of The Humanity Coalition project. From the Humanists, when asked “Do you think, as a Humanist, engaging in collaboration with religious adherents who are open to such collaboration for the sake of community dialogue and action could be positive and productive?” one person answered “It’s necessary because we have such an undeserved reputation that the majority of Americans will have nothing to do with us.” Another claimed “It could help since, ironically, we’re considered Satanists!”

In written comments on the post-presentation survey, half a dozen Humanists expressed concern about exclusive use of religious language and the need to feel respected in collaboration. Comments from the religious adherents included “It’s good to know we have possible partners,” and “We need to work together.” There wasn’t much concern expressed by the religious adherents with regard to collaboration, although in

private conversation with me one person did share a past experience of “being made to feel stupid by an atheist” at an interfaith event. I admit to feeling frustrated by one particular written comment on the survey: “I’m sad they’re not God-centered.” This comment indicates to me that the participant missed the focus of the project and was not ready or willing to look beyond their own religious perspective. I regret that I was unable to speak with this participant and gain more clarity on their comment. Clearly, this is a downside of having anonymous surveys.

I met my goal, exceeded the expected results, and have gained valuable information about Humanists and religious adherents in Connecticut. But I am aware of the fact that there is a substantial gap between the numbers of live and online participants from the Humanist communities. Allowing for more time, perhaps a full twelve months, to meet with groups in person would have closed that gap. It also would have afforded me more opportunity to interact with the participants.

## **Goal 2:**

*Create a team of five people that will assist in developing the Collaboration Vision Initiative by developing criteria for team recruits and then selecting a team and conducting an orientation.*

I assumed that this goal would be easily reached. I was wrong. Coming up with criteria, as explained in a previous chapter, was not difficult. Getting people to commit to be involved in the project was difficult. After reaching out via email to seven people; giving a synopsis of my project and asking them for a brief phone conversation about the consultant guidance I was looking for, I heard back from just four people. Of the four, three were willing to commit their time and expertise to the project. My team of three was very strong and I was pleased with the perspective that each brought to the project. Unfortunately, only two of the three stayed on the team to the end. It was incredibly

discouraging as I was never informed by the team member as to why they were not continuing, or that they were even stepping off the team.

An evaluation criterion for this goal was successful and sustainable recruitment of three people. Successful recruitment of three team members was achieved but the sustainability portion of the task was a failure. I confess not holding a formal orientation for the team members and wonder if that could have made a difference. Spending time with each team member in private conversation seemed helpful but in hindsight, a group orientation may have bonded the team members and created a stronger sense of commitment to the team and the project.

**Goal 3:**

*Develop the Collaboration Vision Initiative by researching online components such as website, live-streaming, YouTube, and social media, and preparing the document.*

The CVI was developed with the help of my consultant team and all online components were researched as described in a previous chapter. An evaluation criterion for Goal 3 was 80% of the plan would be developed and ready for implementation. Development was 100% and ready for implementation and the goal was reached. It is important to note that the implementation originally intended for this goal was connected to my original project proposal and referred to a plan to open an Interfaith Alliance affiliate office. To date, the full implementation of the CVI has not yet been done or tested beyond the awareness-raising work that precipitated and informed the CIV's development.

**Goal 4:**

*Implement the CVI with a launch of the Interfaith Alliance CT affiliate by planning, promoting, and hosting launch event.*

This last goal changed over the course of the project, as has been explained throughout this paper. Instead of implementing the CVI with a launch of an affiliate office event, the goal became sharing the CVI via planning, promoting and hosting a webinar event. The evaluation criteria remained the same.

As explained in Chapter Six, because of technical difficulties I had to reschedule the webinar and do not know how many viewers would have participated in the original event. There were twenty-seven people who viewed the webinar at its rescheduled time; considerably less than the number I had hoped for. The evaluation criterion was 50% of an expected one hundred and fifty attendees. I now realize that expecting even seventy-five participants on the webinar was unrealistic. Before the scheduled webinar, I shared the CVI with my Site Team, the Consultant Team, and a small handful of other interested people. That brought the number of people who saw the CVI up to thirty-six.

If a do-over was possible, there are a number of things I would do differently with regard to this goal. I would begin by utilizing a meeting poll with the Humanist groups and religious adherents I had surveyed to find a day and time for the webinar that was convenient for the most people. Following that up with multiple invitations and reminders of the webinar would be necessary. As well, I would have recorded the webinar and distributed it for viewing. The opportunity for asking questions while watching the webinar would not be available for those who chose to watch the recording, but questions could come to me via email. Lastly, I think I would have considered doing the webinar with a small live audience; inviting some key Humanist and interfaith leaders



to my home and encouraging them to ask questions and offer comments as a part of the webinar.

All four goals for the project were met, some with more success than others. Evaluating the success of those goals, and reflecting on the data produced by the surveys, has led to some revelations on how to better engage the topic of secular and religious collaboration with interested groups in the future. Those revelations include spending more time in one-on-one conversation, whether that is done in person or virtually.

## CHAPTER 8 COMPETENCIES

**Ecumenist** - *Exercise and grow competency in encouraging interfaith understanding, in fostering dialog across religious lines, and in providing structural opportunities for multifaith action.*

My strategies for this competency included using information gathered through interviews with Humanist and interfaith leaders to write three articles for publication and working with a curriculum development team in the Master in Interfaith Action degree program at Claremont Lincoln University, along with teaching the “Religion in the Public Sphere” course. Evaluation of this competency was based on successful completion and promotion of publication of two articles, and feedback received from the program dean and team members.

The change of direction in my project did create a change in my writing and I did not successfully complete and promote the publication of two articles. I wrote a blog post for Claremont Lincoln University on the subject of religious liberty.<sup>121</sup> I also preached a sermon to two Connecticut Unitarian Universalist congregations on the topic of connection that relates to interfaith engagement.<sup>122</sup> A similar message was delivered at a Humanist Haven gathering of the Yale Humanist Community (YHC), in October, 2017. While none of these writings were articles, as initially intended, they were writings

---

<sup>121</sup> See Appendix G.

<sup>122</sup> Preached at The Universalist Church of West Hartford on October 29, 2017, and at Unitarian Universalist Society: East, in Manchester, Connecticut, on December 3, 2017.

relevant to the heart of my project and were well received by both religious adherents and Humanists.

Another important piece of writing that generally connects to my project's work is one not written by me but includes an interview with me. The Huffington Post published an article in their religion section about YHC's contribution to the seasonal display on the New Haven green. My role as Executive Director of the organization provided me with an opportunity to speak about the importance of shared values and inclusion of people of all religions and no religion in the greater New Haven community.<sup>123</sup> Immediately after the Huffington Post article was published I was asked to be interviewed on a local radio show and, again, was afforded an opportunity to speak about Humanism and the importance of inclusion, cooperation, and collaboration in the wider community.<sup>124</sup>

Two months were spent working on development of a course in faith-based nonprofit administration for Claremont Lincoln University (CLU). I worked on a team with two other individuals and focused my contributions on use of technology and social media, as well as organizational mission and vision. Feedback from the program Dean and my team members was positive. I also taught two courses in CLU's Master of Arts in Interfaith Action program: "Religion in the Public Sphere - Faith, Politics, and Rhetoric," and "Power and Privilege - in Self and Society." Feedback from the program Dean and my students was positive. A number of students remarked to me that they had been

---

<sup>123</sup> Carol Kuruvilla, "Yale Humanists Seek To Unite New Haven Community With Holiday Obelisk," *Huffington Post*, December 18, 2017, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/humanist-obelisk-new-haven\\_us\\_5a3803c9e4b01d429ccb49a1#](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/humanist-obelisk-new-haven_us_5a3803c9e4b01d429ccb49a1#).

<sup>124</sup> Valerie Richardson, "The Lighthouse," - Discussion with Kathleen Green and Ted Salmon, WPKN Community Radio, podcast posted January 2, 2018, <http://soundcloud.com/wpkn895/the-lighthouse-discussion-with-kathleen-green-and-ted-salmon>.

unaware of Humanism, and had not considered the inclusion of Humanists in interfaith action before taking my courses.

My ecumenist competency has been strengthened through my work with YHC and CLU. There continues to be room for growth and a deepening of my own capacity to foster dialogue and provide structural opportunities for engagement.

**Professional** - *Continue development of technological competency as well as self-awareness as it relates to evaluations.*

My strategies for this competency included participating in workshops and trainings in various technology areas such as ZOOM, podcast creation, social media utilization, and video live streaming, as well as enlisting a positive psychology coach to help me further develop both self-awareness and relationship strength as it relates to the project and receiving personal evaluations. Evaluation of this competency was based on successful completion of two workshops/trainings, and meeting with my coach three times; requesting feedback on my development.

The technology portion of this competency went well and was very successful. I participated in a number of workshop trainings offered by the ZOOM platform, over the course of ten months (Feb. 2017-Nov. 2017). The subject matter included webinars, break out rooms, closed captioning, integration, branding, and streaming. I researched podcast creation and have plans to pursue podcasting in the future. Facebook live video was used on two occasions. The first was for an Introduction to Humanism workshop through YHC, and the second was for an interfaith candlelight vigil following a mass shooting in Las Vegas. I continue to use the social networking sites I am familiar with, such as Facebook, MeetUp, and Twitter, and I plan to continue developing this portion of

the competency by learning how best to utilize Instagram and Snap Chat. I'm also considering additional webinar platforms.

I was able to work with two positive psychology coaches during the course of my project and met twice with one coach and three times with the second coach. I received helpful feedback that has encouraged my personal growth with regard to handling evaluations, criticism, and conflict. As a result of this feedback I will continue to seek out guidance from leadership mentors as I commit to persistent work in my conflict management skills. I also received feedback from my coaches that has encouraged me to be more intentional about including elements of positive psychology into my work. Throughout my work with the positive psychology coaches I have been inspired to consider coaching faith leaders, interfaith groups, and other leaders of similar type groups as a part of my professional ministry in the future.

My professional competency has grown in the area of technology and has been increased by my use of positive psychology and work with positive psychology coaches. As technology is in a constant state of change, and my own ministry continues to evolve, I acknowledge the need for consistent attention to professional competency and ongoing growth.

**Faith-rooted Community Organizer** - *Develop the ability to build coalitions, to enable others to utilize their gifts, and to support people in the face of risk and loss.*

My strategies for this competency included engaging with other community organizers through conversation and observation of their work; sharing my project plans, and participating in a community organizing workshop or training. Evaluation for this competency was based on requesting feedback from three community organizers on my

plans, consideration of the conversations and observations with the organizers in regard to my project development, and successful completion of one training or workshop.

This particular competency was an area of disappointment and frustration for me. Foremost, it was the lack of availability of local community organizers that I found disappointing. It was a very difficult task to find community organizers who were willing to take time to either meet with me or have a phone conversation. I met in person with a local UU colleague who is involved in community organizing, as well as by phone with a UU colleague who previously served as the Executive Director of the UU Legislative Ministry of New Jersey. I was able to share with both of them the general plans for The Humanity Coalition but was unable to observe any current work that either colleague was doing with regard to community organizing. I was able to research faith-based community organizers, and watched recordings and live video of the work being done by North Carolina-based organizer Dr. William Barber. I also attended a community organizing workshop hosted by Planned Parenthood of New Haven, which was geared toward faith leaders.<sup>125</sup> But, again, the majority of my work in this competency area came from reading and research.

My recent work as Executive Director of YHC has tied into this competency and I am learning through trial and error to build a coalition, encourage volunteers and help them find ways in which to utilize their gifts, and to support those I work with. I believe that my competency in this particular area of ministry will continue to grow as I enlarge my involvement in social justice and develop strong relationships with other Humanist leaders.

---

<sup>125</sup> Planned Parenthood Community Organizing Workshop held in New Haven, Connecticut, June 10-11, 2017.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The challenges in bringing Humanists and religious adherents together will be many, as will shifting the interfaith landscape and the perceptions about Humanism. But I am not deterred. What I had in great supply during the course of my project, and have to this day, is passion and hope. As Martin Luther said, “Everything that is done in the world is done by hope.” The possibilities for Phase II of The Humanity Coalition, as named in Chapter 6, are not only hopeful, they are realistic and many are already underway in some form. The Humanity Coalition focuses on my current location and the third most religiously diverse state in the United States — Connecticut. I am starting where I am planted. But the future of this project, and the future of my ministry, goes far beyond Connecticut.

Reflection on the evaluation process clarified the value of verbal feedback. To this point, the adage “less is more” does not apply. The one specific item that would have enhanced and expanded my work is increased verbal feedback from as many people as possible, and received through a diversity of venues. I do not know exactly how, or even if that increased feedback would have changed the project outcome, but I am certain it would have had some impact. Each small step forward is a success and each instance of failure is a stepping stone towards achievement.

I come away from this project affirming the idea that significant change as is required to bring Humanists and religious adherents together takes compassion, a non-anxious presence, and much time. As I consider the work necessary to change, shift, and

raise the roof in interfaith social justice engagement, I recognize that changing mindsets is paramount. Both Humanists and religious adherents need to examine their own mindset regarding assumptions about each other. It isn't an easy task to look deep within oneself and acknowledge the places where fear of the other, arrogance, and insecurity lives. A desire for growing awareness and deepening compassion is essential.

When it comes to finding meaning in life, Humanists and religious adherents are not so different. Both religious and non-religious people find and construct meaning from their community, family, jobs, and sense of purpose. Hedges expresses it best when he submits that people relate to the mundane world around us rather than to ultimate realities. "Meaning, more often than not, is located in the local."<sup>126</sup> Putting focus on the here and now is most useful when we live in a world where religious adherents and Humanists must learn to coexist peacefully, compassionately, and respectfully.

Responsibility is central to what it means to be human and that responsibility includes the interdependence of connection. The joining of individuality with interdependence enriches our lives, encourages us to enrich the lives of others, and inspires hope of attaining peace and opportunity for all of humanity. In Rumi's poem "On Being Woven," he speaks about the power of connection and relationship: "A wall standing alone is useless, but put three or four walls together and they support a roof and keep the grain dry and safe."<sup>127</sup> After all, there is no monolithic Humanist just as there is no monolithic Christian or Muslim. All traditions, both religious and philosophical, change over time. Change is how they survive. To acknowledge the changing nature of

---

<sup>126</sup> Hedges, 171.

<sup>127</sup> Ǧalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, and Coleman Barks. *The Essential Rumi*, trans. Coleman Barks and John Moyne (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), 246.



such traditions is to understand history. By understanding history, we are able to move forward in creating the future we desire.

Fruitful and transformative ministry evolves with the changing needs of humanity and is made of the work we all do together. I began this paper with the words of Rev. Gordon McKeeman as they are my ministerial touchstone. He shared his observation and experience of professional ministry with the wise words that described ministry as all that we do together. And as wise as he was, I cannot imagine that he envisioned the expanse of ministry that technology is enabling for the future, or that interfaith engagement would one day include the non-religious. Unitarian Universalism is still anathema in some religious circles. I continue to embrace McKeeman's wisdom and commit myself to a ministry that evangelizes the compassion and respect of The Humanity Coalition and all of the possibilities it births. All of it, for ministry is what we all do together.

## APPENDICES

.

Appendix A  
Demonstration Project Proposal

THE HUMANITY COALITION: BRINGING HUMANISTS AND RELIGIOUS  
BELIEVERS TOGETHER IN INTERFAITH DIALOGUE AND ACTION

By

KATHLEEN A. GREEN

A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL

New York Theological Seminary

2018

**Challenge Statement**

As an interfaith advocate and humanist Unitarian Universalist minister in Old Lyme, CT, I have observed that Humanism is too often the missing voice in interfaith dialogue and action. Continuing to ignore this reality has the potential to further deepen the dangerous divide between people of religious and secular traditions. This demonstration project will create a collaboration vision initiative (ministry plan) to bring Humanists and religious believers together by establishing an Interfaith Alliance affiliate in CT.

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1	
INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING.....	1
CHAPTER 2	
PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE.....	6
CHAPTER 3	
PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION.....	9
CHAPTER 4	
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	11
CHAPTER 5	
EVALUATION PROCESS.....	13
CHAPTER 6	
MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES.....	14
APPENDIX 1: TIMELINE.....	20
APPENDIX 2: BUDGET.....	23
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	24

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING

*“Ministry is all that we do—Together. Ministry is that quality of being in community that affirms human dignity—beckons forth hidden possibilities, invites us into deeper, more constant, reverent relationships, and carries forward our heritage of hope and liberation. Ministry is what we do together as we celebrate triumphs of our human spirit, miracles of birth and life, wonders of devotion and sacrifice.*

*Ministry is what we do together—with one another—in terror and torment—in grief, in misery and pain, enabling us in the presence of death to say yes to life. We who minister speak and live the best we know with full knowledge that it is never quite enough... And yet are reassured by lostness found, fragments reunited, wounds healed, and joy shared. Ministry is what we all do—together.”*

The words of Unitarian Universalist minister, Gordon McKeeman, were spoken at my ordination in Jan., 2007, and have served as a reminder since that date of my call to serve humanity through the vehicle of professional ministry. Today that call has expanded beyond the congregations of Unitarian Universalism and into the broader community that includes both the secular and the religious. Indeed, support for The Humanity Coalition project will come from Connecticut’s interfaith and humanist communities with their plethora of diverse people, faiths, and philosophical perspectives.

Eboo Patel, founder and president of Interfaith Youth Core, has described an interfaith leader as someone who works to help people who orient around religion differently to have a common life together.<sup>1</sup> As I increase my own capacity as an interfaith leader I

---

<sup>1</sup> Eboo Patel, *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2016), 11.

seek to work alongside other leaders who hold a wide vision for collaboration. The Interfaith Alliance is such an organization. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., Interfaith Alliance was created in 1994, “to celebrate religious freedom and to challenge the bigotry and hatred arising from religious and political extremism infiltrating American politics.”<sup>2</sup> To date, Interfaith Alliance has members across the country from seventy-five faith traditions, as well as members who are not affiliated with any faith tradition. Currently, twenty-one Interfaith Alliance affiliate offices are located across the nation. Each one operates according to the guidelines set by the national office, with ample room for growth and creativity from each affiliate Director. Working with Interfaith Alliance to create an affiliate presence (The Humanity Coalition) in Connecticut, widens the ministry setting of this demonstration project.

Connecticut is a state where precise data on the number of interfaith and humanist groups is lacking, although the state is known to have a number of both. Hartford Seminary has a growing multi faith Doctorate of Ministry degree program, and there are fifteen active Unitarian Universalist congregations and at least five Humanist groups throughout the state. There are many possible interfaith allies and enthusiasts with which to engage.

Connecticut is also geographically diverse as parts of the small state are considered metro New York, and other more central and northern parts are considered New England. This particular diversity can be challenging with regard to location for this project. With that in mind, The Humanity Coalition will have a physical presence through a small office on the Connecticut shoreline, in Old Lyme, and periodic gatherings held in public

---

<sup>2</sup> “About Us.” Interfaith Alliance, accessed Nov. 10, 2016, <http://interfaithalliance.org/about-us/>.

spaces throughout the state. The larger vision for The Humanity Coalition includes a vibrant online presence via website, social media, and live-streamed events. This larger vision initiative will increase inclusivity and dispense with the in-person-only meetings that can limit participation and discourage membership. Both a physical and online site will be established.

Fifty-one per cent of Connecticut's residents identify as religious (affiliate with a religion). According to the Pew Research Center, just over twenty per cent of adults in Connecticut are "religious nones", ten per cent are atheist or agnostic, and fourteen per cent identify as "nothing in particular".<sup>3</sup> What will make the Connecticut affiliate of Interfaith Alliance unique is the intentional recruitment and inclusion of Humanist voices. The Humanist voices may come from the "religious nones", atheists, agnostics, or those who have claimed their religious affiliation as "nothing in particular". As such, the symbols from all participating affiliations, including Humanists, will be utilized and respected, and the theological character of the affiliate will be one of pluralism. No one theological perspective will be favored over others, and common values, as opposed to beliefs, will be paramount to the work of the affiliate.

One of the biggest challenges facing The Humanity Coalition will likely be resources, particularly financial resources. Talking to leaders of nonprofit organizations, or even a quick google search of the topic, reveals a difficult truth. Raising funds is the greatest challenge for leaders as philanthropic giving has not yet returned to pre-recession levels.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> "Religious Landscape Study." Pew Center Research, last modified 2016, accessed November 10, 2016, <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/connecticut/>.

<sup>4</sup> Jennifer Chandler, "2015 Trends to Watch." National Council of Nonprofits, January 19, 2015, accessed November 10, 2016, <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/thought-leadership/2015-trends-watch>.



This will have to be addressed in the Collaboration Vision Initiative produced as a part of this project.

As asserted by McKeeman, ministry is that quality of being in community that affirms human dignity. That is the ministry being done by Interfaith Alliance and its affiliates; making a difference through national policy, grass-roots activism, and education. As an extension of the national organization, The Humanity Coalition will focus on bringing people together; educating Connecticut's religious believers and Humanists on the importance and power of collaboration and cooperation as realized through the work of the affiliate. Ministry is all that we - Humanists and religious believers - do together.

## CHAPTER 2 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE

As an interfaith advocate and humanist Unitarian Universalist minister in Old Lyme, CT, I have observed that Humanism is too often the missing voice in interfaith dialogue and action. Continuing to ignore this reality has the potential to further deepen the dangerous divide between people of religious and secular traditions. This demonstration project will create a collaboration vision initiative (ministry plan) to bring Humanists and religious believers together by establishing an Interfaith Alliance affiliate in CT.

Humanism uses science and reason to make sense of the world, puts human beings at the center of one's moral outlook, and champions human rights for everyone. Unfortunately, the Humanist voice is missing in most interfaith organizations. Many religious believers do not know what Humanism is or know that there are Humanists who would be willing to collaborate with members of interfaith groups. Conversely, many Humanists do not realize that there are religious believers who are willing to work with them. In an event as large as the 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions, with nearly ten thousand attendees, over one hundred countries and nearly as many faith traditions represented, the lack of Humanist voices in plenary sessions and major presentations was stunning.<sup>5</sup> I am not of the mind that the absence or lack was intentional on the part of either group (religious believers or Humanists), but rather a lack of awareness on the part of both groups.

---

<sup>5</sup> Kathleen Green, "The Missing Link: Humanists at the Parliament of World Religions", *The Humanist*, November 2, 2015, <https://thehumanist.com/commentary/the-missing-link-humanists-at-the-parliament-of-world-religions>.

For far too long some Humanist voices, in the form of extremist atheism and anti-theism, have dominated the perceptions of the public. New Atheism came onto the scene in the mid 2000's and, generally speaking, is proving to be as rigid, conservative, and extremist as the religious zealots they rail against. New Atheists have been referred to by some nonbelievers and agnostics as "secular fundamentalists".<sup>6</sup> This has only furthered the divide between atheist Humanists and religious believers. I meet too many people who think atheism is a monolith, and some who think all Humanists are atheists. This is the counterpart to nonbelievers thinking there is a monolithic Christian or Muslim. Education in this area will be challenging, and most successful by building trust through relationships.

It may seem as though the lack of Humanists in interfaith organizations is not worthy of great attention and not an issue with serious implications. But at a time in our country where the separation of church and state is crumbling rapidly, religious freedom is being defined by religious extremists, politicians are calling for the removal of entire religious groups; making claims that theirs is the one true religion and they will lead the country accordingly, bringing people together is an urgent necessity. Educating people on the impact of collaboration where there are shared values is a desperately needed undertaking. All of the "isms" that plague our society, and their respective justice campaigns (racial justice, environmental justice, reproductive justice, economic justice, etc.), will be positively impacted by the combined efforts of religious believers and Humanists.

---

<sup>6</sup> David Hoelscher, "New Atheism, Worse Than You Think", *Counterpunch*, January 29, 2016, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/01/29/new-atheism-worse-than-you-think/>.

I am fully aware that this project is a tremendous undertaking that will include disappointments and setbacks. The awareness raising and education that is needed between the religious and Humanist communities is critical and will not be wholly fulfilled in one year. Indeed, the need for continuing education will be constant and ongoing. The need is best described as what Eboo Patel asserts as an important part of the interfaith leader's task: "...construct environments that highlight similarities in faiths across diverse people and groups", with faith defined as how people relate to their religious or ethical traditions.<sup>7</sup>

I expect that The Humanity Coalition will help to create new relationships between Humanists and religious believers, deepen already existing bonds between Humanists and religious believers, educate people on what Humanism is and the power of multipath cooperation, establish a collective voice for justice and change in Connecticut and beyond, and stand as a model for other interfaith groups.

---

<sup>7</sup> Patel, *Interfaith Leadership*, 39, 75.

### **CHAPTER 3 PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Goals and Strategies**

**Goal 1 –** Raise awareness of the missing humanist participation in interfaith communities.

**Strategy 1:** Engage in an outreach campaign to CT Humanists. (Feb.-March, 2017)

**Strategy 2:** Conduct round table discussions with religious leaders involved in interfaith dialogue and action. (May - June, 2017)

**Evaluation of Goal 1:** A pre and post questionnaire from participants in both strategies, with 75% return.

**Goal 2 -** Create a team of 7 people that will assist in developing the Collaboration Vision Initiative (CVI).

**Strategy 1:** Develop criteria for team recruits. (Feb., 2017)

**Strategy 2:** Select team and conduct orientation. (March, 2017)

**Evaluation of Goal 3:** Successful and sustainable recruitment of 5 people.

**Goal 3 - Develop the CVI.**

**Strategy 1:** Research online components such as website, live-streaming, YouTube, and social media. (April - Aug., 2017)

**Strategy 2:** Prepare the CVI. (April - Aug., 2017)

**Evaluation of Goal 3:** 80% of plan developed and ready for implementation.

**Goal 4 - Implement the CVI with a launch of the Interfaith Alliance CT affiliate.**

**Strategy 1:** Plan and promote launch event. (Aug. - Sept., 2017)

**Strategy 2:** Host launch event. (Oct., 2017)

**Evaluation of Goal 4:** 50% of 150 expected attendees at launch event.

## CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### Sacred Text/Theological

*What does the Humanist Manifesto have to say about working on social justice issues alongside religious believers?*

The British Humanist Association defines and describes Humanism in a clear and concise manner: 1. Putting human beings and other living things at the center of your moral outlook; 2. Seeing the world as a natural place and looking to science and reason to make sense of it; 3. Promoting and supporting human flourishing across all frontiers, and championing human rights for everyone.

The Humanist Manifesto, updated twice since it's first writing in 1933, speaks to a wide variety of life issues from a Humanist perspective, including issues of social justice. An exegetical study of this document will provide grounding for the project.

### Psychological

*What are the trends in interfaith participation with regard to the notion of membership and diversity of religious perspectives?*

With the increasing use of technology and creation of virtual communities, the ideas of membership and belonging continue to evolve in religious and nonprofit organizations. Creating new and inventive interfaith communities requires an understanding and

examination of the types of religious/spiritual/philosophical perspectives that are currently included in such communities, as well as the types that desire representation.

### Social

*How is social media being utilized to further community-building and social justice work?*

Political revolutions are started with a Facebook post, online support communities garner thousands of participants, and the possibilities for connection and service across the globe are plentiful. What are the best practices and success stories of community creation by social media? How are social justice issues being engaged through technology?



## **CHAPTER 5 EVALUATION PROCESS**

The evaluation process most useful and appropriate for gauging the success of The Humanity Coalition project, focused on bringing religious believers and Humanists together for interfaith dialogue and action, is through two types of feedback.

### **Method of evaluation 1 – Questionnaire Data**

In February/March (Goal 1: Strategy 1) and May/June (Goal 1: Strategy 2) 2017, pre and post questionnaires will be given to 25 Humanists and 25 religious leaders who participate in meetings and discussions. A document with collected questionnaire data will be available by July 15, 2017, for review by the Site Team as well as the staff at The Interfaith Alliance.

**Method of evaluation 2 – Oral/Written Feedback** Oral feedback will be requested in September from The Interfaith Alliance with regard to the CVI (Goal 3: Strategy 2), and written feedback will be requested in October from launch event attendees (Goal 4: Strategy 2).

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES**

The Site Team members are Fr. Carl Chudy of Hartford, CT, Rev. Dr. Hope Johnson of Queens, NY, Chris Stedman of New Haven, CT, and Nels White of Norfolk, CT. Father Chudy is a Catholic priest engaged in multifaith studies in the DMin program at Hartford Seminary. He brings his perspective as a religious leader, Catholic, and interfaith activist. Dr. Johnson is a Unitarian Universalist minister who received her DMin from New York Theological Seminary. She brings her perspective as a religious leader, Unitarian Universalist colleague, and NYTS alum. Mr. Stedman is a Humanist chaplain and Executive Director of the Yale Humanist Community. He brings his perspective as a Humanist leader, nonprofit leader, and interfaith activist in Connecticut. Mr. White is an active member and lay leader in the First Congregational Church of Norfolk, CT. He brings his perspective as part of the United Church of Christ tradition and as a long-time Connecticut resident.

On July 27, 2016 the Site Team met via video conference to discuss the Ministerial Competency Assessment. The team agreed that I had developed many of the competencies described but thought there were some competencies that would be most important for my use and further development for the Demonstration Project. Those thoughts were shared with me for consideration.

The Team corresponded via email during the first week of Nov., 2016, to further comment on all of the competencies as required for the project proposal. One of the challenges for the Team is that some of the competencies have not been fully witnessed or experienced by any of the members. I have inserted “not thoroughly observed” where applicable. Input from the Site Team was shared with me and was used to select three specific competencies for development with the Demonstration Project.

Theologian: (not thoroughly observed) Rev. Kathleen has a working knowledge of other disciplines, including the secular field of positive psychology.

Preacher/Interpreter of Sacred Text: Rev. Kathleen is extremely effective with language and delivery, and inspires listeners to growth and action on contemporary issues. This to me may be an important part of her work; communication within an interfaith environment, religious and non-religious. It will be helpful to factor in the guiding text of today for the non-religious.

Worship Leader: With musical skill and outstanding dramatic/presentation skills, Rev. Kathleen is creative in making the liturgy come alive for her congregation. She appeals to different constituencies (young, handicapped, elderly, etc.) in her gatherings. It is in these circles of inspiration, motivation, and widening consciousness, that connections between us are made more visible.

Prophetic Agent: Rev. Kathleen has a deep commitment to social justice, especially for LGBT people and for reproductive rights. She motivates and includes others in action for social change. This competency is crucial as our interconnections beg the question: What do we do? The prophetic quality of this competency signifies a vision of life, justice,

peace, and solidarity that transcends the very obstacles to these important values. The belief that acting together can change the chaos is crucial to being prophetic.

Leader: Skills in this area are quite honed for many years. Of the many qualities that enhance this competency are communication, and the ability to share a vision that is infectious. Rev. Kathleen has demonstrated many leadership competencies while serving as pastor of Unitarian Universalist congregations over the past decade. She has inspired both staff and volunteers to use their gifts in embracing her initiatives to strengthen community ministries. She needs to continue to develop her abilities to empower others through listening and learning from them while at the same time motivating them to achieve, providing them support, and giving constructive criticism.

Religious Educator: (not thoroughly observed) She has special concern for teaching children (Note: author of a children's Humanist book); skilled in creation and delivery of effective educational materials.

Counselor: (not thoroughly observed) She is certified in Positive Psychology. This competency may refer to problem solving in the personal choices and effects of people's lives, but it also can refer to that one-on-one component which is so crucial in ministry.

Pastor: Rev. Kathleen seeks out and makes welcome new members of the congregation. She gives caring attention to members who are ill, troubled, or bereaved and is sought out for performing joyous weddings and inspiring memorial ceremonies.

Spiritual Leader: She is knowledgeable and respectful of many faith traditions. From a humanist perspective, it might be useful to consider the thoughts of Alain de Botton, especially his wholistic sense of being atheist in the world that encompasses the arts, humanity, and more.

*Ecumenist:* Throughout her career Rev. Kathleen has demonstrated a passion for working with people of different faith traditions. She continues to promote “Multipath Understanding” through service projects uniting people from religious communities with those from the humanist community. She will also need the ability to persuade her own community to put social action progress ahead of faith differences.

*Witness or Evangelist:* Rev. Kathleen is a dedicated spokesperson and example for social justice and for interfaith cooperation.

*Administrator:* Exemplary in organizing and following through on tasks.

*Professional:* Rev. Kathleen is recognized for excellence in communication and in personable relations with others. It will be important for her to further develop her self awareness, as in the ability to say “no” when necessary, to deal constructively with conflict, and to practice self-care. Evaluation is also important, including how to adjust in light of evaluations. She is growing in technological competency and as we feel she will need to continue developing in this area, we felt it best to include technology in this particular competency.

*Pastoral Skills:* (not thoroughly observed) She has a heart for children, elderly, handicapped, and people treated unjustly.

*Interpersonal Skills:* Rev. Kathleen is loved, admired, and respected by all who know her. There is room for growth in conflict resolution skills.

*Faith-rooted Community Organizer:* Although Rev. Kathleen has had no formal community organizing experience, she has shown the ability to inspire small groups to work for justice and peace in the community. Kathleen may want to consider the insights of quantum spirituality.

Competencies chosen for development:

**ECUMENIST:** Exercise and grow competency in encouraging interfaith understanding, in fostering dialog across religious lines, and in providing structural opportunities for multifaith action.

**Strategies:**

1. I will use information gathered through interviews with Humanist and interfaith leaders to write 3 articles for publication: 2 on the importance of interfaith understanding, and 1 article specifically regarding the Interfaith Alliance affiliate in CT, and the opportunity it will provide for multifaith social action.
2. I will work with a curriculum development team in the Masters in Interfaith Action degree program at Claremont Lincoln University and will teach the *Religion in the Public Sphere* course.

**Evaluation:**

- a) Successful completion and promotion of publication of 2 articles.
- b) I will receive feedback from the program dean and 2 team members.

**PROFESSIONAL:** Continue development of technological competency as well as self awareness as it relates to evaluations.

**Strategies:**

1. I will participate in workshops and trainings in various technology areas such as ZOOM, podcast creation, social media utilization, and video live streaming.
2. I will enlist a positive psychology coach and use tools in applied positive psychology to further develop both self awareness and relationship strength as it relates to the project and evaluations.

**Evaluation:**

- a) Successful completion of 2 workshops/trainings.
- b) I will meet with my coach 3 times; requesting feedback on my development and use of positive psychology.

**FAITH-ROOTED COMMUNITY ORGANIZER:** Develop the ability to build coalitions, to enable others to utilize their gifts, and to support people in the face of risk and loss.

**Strategies:**

- 1. I will engage with other community organizers through conversation and observation of their work; sharing my plans for the affiliate.
- 2. I will participate in a community organizing workshop or training.

**Evaluation:**

- a) I will request feedback from 3 community organizers on my plans and will consider the conversations and observations with the organizers in regard to my project development.
- b) Successful completion of 1 training or workshop.

### Appendix A: TIMELINE

Date	Task/Activity	Tools Required	Person Responsible
Nov. 2016	Proposal Approval		Kathleen
Dec. 2016	Meet with Site Team (ST)		Kathleen
Dec. 2016	Conference call with The Interfaith Alliance (TIA)	Copy of approved proposal sent ahead	Kathleen
Jan. 2017	Meet with Advisor	Teleconference	Kathleen
Jan. 2017	Develop questionnaire for Goal 1		Kathleen and a member of ST
Jan. 2017	Reach out to Humanist Groups for visits Feb.-July		Kathleen and a member of ST
Jan. 2017	Social Media research		Kathleen
Feb. 2017	Develop criteria for CVI team and plan orientation		Kathleen and members of ST
Feb. 2017	Write article		Kathleen
Feb. 2017	Manifesto research		Kathleen
Feb. 2017	Schedule interviews for competency strategy		Kathleen and a member of ST
Feb. 2017	Meet with ST	Teleconference	Kathleen
March 2017	Check in with TIA	Teleconference	Kathleen
March 2017	Psychological research		Kathleen
March 2017	Select CVI team and conduct orientation		Kathleen and members of ST



March 2017	Conduct interviews		Kathleen
April 2017	Plan and schedule round table discussions		Kathleen and a member of ST
April 2017	Conduct interviews	Teleconference and travel	Kathleen
April 2017	Meet with Advisor	Teleconference	Kathleen
April 2017	Work with CIV team		Kathleen
May 2017	Conduct interviews	Teleconference and travel	Kathleen
May 2017	Round table discussions	Refreshments	Kathleen and a member of ST
May 2017	Write article		Kathleen
May 2017	Meet with ST	Teleconference	Kathleen
June 2017	Conclude interviews	Teleconference and travel	Kathleen
June 2017	Round table discussions	Refreshments	Kathleen and a member of ST
July 2017	Gather and distribute info. from questionnaires and interviews		Kathleen and a member of ST
July 2017	Continue research		Kathleen
July 2017	Meet with Advisor	Teleconference	Kathleen
Aug. 2017	Begin planning for launch party		Kathleen, TIA and Launch Team
Aug. 2017	Continue research		Kathleen
Aug. 2017	Meet with ST		Kathleen

Aug. 2017	Meet with CVI team		Kathleen
Sept. 2017	Meet with TIA to seek feedback on CVI and promote launch event		Kathleen, TIA, and Launch Team
Sept. 2017	Meet with Advisor	Teleconference	Kathleen
Sept. 2017	Write article		Kathleen
Oct. 2017	Meet with ST	Teleconference	Kathleen
Oct. 2017	Launch party	Location rental, invites, food, flyers	Kathleen, Launch Team, and ST
Oct. 2017	Seek feedback from launch event attendees		Kathleen and member of ST
Nov. 2017	Meet with Advisor		Kathleen
Nov. 2017	Writing		Kathleen
Dec. 2017	Writing		Kathleen
Jan. 2017	Review and rewrite		Kathleen, Advisor, ST
Feb. 2018	DP Submission		

## Appendix B: BUDGET

Month/Year	Task/Activity	\$	Source of funding
Dec. 2016	Meet with Site Team	\$50 if meeting in person	Kathleen
March 2017	Interview travel/teleconference	\$500	
March 2017	CVI team orientation	\$50	
April 2017	Interview travel/teleconference	\$250	
April 2017	Work with CVI team	(\$50)	Donation
May 2017	Interview travel/teleconference	\$500	
May 2017	Round Table events	(\$50)	Donation
June 2017	Interview travel/teleconference	\$500	
June 2017	Round Table events	(\$50)	Donation
Aug. 2017	Data report copies	\$25	
Aug. 2017	Meet with CVI	(\$50)	Donation
Oct. 2017	Office launch party refreshments, invites, location, flyers	\$200 (\$350)	Kathleen Donation

Budget: \$2075 expected + \$250 unexpected expenses = \$2325

## Bibliography

- "5 Ways Social Media Connects Religion to Younger Generations." 2015. *World Religion News*. July 3. <http://www.worldreligionnews.com/>.
- "About Us." 2013. *Yale Humanist Community*. March 21. <http://yalehumanists.com/about/>.
- Abu-Nimer, Mohammed, Amal Khoury, and Emily Welty. 2007. *Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Alexander, Eben. 2012. *Proof of Heaven: a Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Allport, Gordon W. 1954. *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.
- "American Humanist Association." 2016. *American Humanist Association*. Accessed May 17. <http://americanhumanist.org/>.
- Andrain, Charles F. 2008. *Political Justice and Religious Values*. New York: Routledge.
- Armstrong, Karen. 1993. *A History of God: the 4000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*. New York: A.A. Knopf.
- Armstrong, Karen. 2016. "Home." *Home*. Accessed May 17. <http://www.charterforcompassion.org/>.
- Asbeck, Richard. 2010. *Religious Pluralism: Modern Concepts for Interfaith Dialogue*. Munich: Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung.
- Asimov, Janet. 2006. *Notes for a Memoir: on Isaac Asimov, Life, and Writing*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Baab, Lynne M. 2008. *Reaching out in a Networked World: Expressing Your Congregation's Heart and Soul*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute.
- Bacon, Jono. 2009. *Art of Community*.
- Baker, Chris, and Jonathan Miles-Watson. 2008. "Exploring Secular Spiritual Capital: An Engagement in Religious and Secular Dialogue for a Common Future?" *International Journal of Public Theology* 2 (4): 442–64. doi:10.1163/156973208x335297.

- Bane, Mary Jo., Brent Coffin, and Richard Higgins. 2005. *Taking Faith Seriously*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bell, Ryan. 2015. "The Story of God." Audio blog. *Life After God*. March 29. [www.lifeaftergod.org](http://www.lifeaftergod.org)
- Bellah, Robert N. 1985. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Berger, Peter L. 2014. *The Many Altars of Modernity: toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age*. Boston: De Gruyter.
- Blackburn, Simon. 2001. *Being Good: an Introduction to Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- BlueOceanStrtg. 2016. "Blue Ocean Strategy." *Blue Ocean Strategy*. Accessed November 9. <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/>.
- Boller, Paul F. 1963. *George Washington & Religion*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press.
- Bonk, Curtis Jay. 2009. *The World Is Open: How Web Technology Is Revolutionizing Education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brinton, Henry G. 2010. "Are Social Media Changing Religion." *USA Today*, June 20. [usatoday30.usatoday.com](http://usatoday30.usatoday.com).
- Bryant, Fred Boyd, and Joseph Veroff. 2007. *Savoring: a New Model of Positive Experience*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Bstan-É½dzin-rgya-mtsho. 2010. *Toward a True Kinship of Faiths: How the World's Religions Can Come Together*. New York: Doubleday Religion.
- Buehrens, John A., and F. Forrester. Church. 1998. *A Chosen Faith: an Introduction to Unitarian Universalism*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Buehrens, John A., and Rebecca Ann. Parker. 2010. *A House for Hope: the Promise of Progressive Religion for the Twenty-First Century*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Bumb, Nikhil. 2016. "Now, More than Ever, We Need Pluralism." *Huffington Post*. June 14. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/>.
- Burklo, Jim. 2016. "Seven Principles of Interfaith Engagement." *Huffington Post*, April 13. [www.huffingtonpost.com](http://www.huffingtonpost.com)

- Campbell, Cynthia McCall. 2007. *A Multitude of Blessings: a Christian Approach to Religious Diversity*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Campolo, Bart. 2016. "The Definition of Community." *Bart Campolo*. September 27. <http://bartcampolo.org/>.
- Cannadine, David. 2013. *The Undivided Past: Humanity beyond Our Differences*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Cannon, Mae Elise. 2009. *Social Justice Handbook: Small Steps for a Better World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books.
- Carlin, George. 1997. *Brain Droppings*. New York: Hyperion.
- Chaffee, Paul. 2014. "Interfaith Education." *The Interfaith Observer*. September. <http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/>.
- Chesterton, G. K. 1922. *What I Saw in America*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company.
- Comte-Sponville, Andr  , and Nancy Huston. 2007. *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality*. New York: Viking Press.
- "Council for Secular Humanism." 2016. *Council for Secular Humanism*. Accessed May 17. <http://www.secularhumanism.org/>.
- "Creating a Culture of Unity through Interfaith Cooperation." n.d. Web log. *Huffington Post*.
- Cote, Richard N. 2005. *Strength and Honor: The Life of Dolley Madison*. Mt. Pleasant, SC: Corinthian Books.
- Davis, Adam. 2009. *Hearing the Call across Traditions: Readings on Faith and Service*. Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Pub.
- Day, Abby. 2008. *Religion and the Individual: Belief, Practice, Identity*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate Pub.
- Dessel, A., M. E. Rogge, and S. B. Garlington. 2006. "Using Intergroup Dialogue to Promote Social Justice and Change." *Social Work* 51 (4): 303–15. doi:10.1093/sw/51.4.303.
- "Dialogue With Others." 2016. *Humanism.org.uk : The BHA*. Accessed November 10. <http://www.searchdmn.net/www/humanism.org.uk>.
- Dworkin, Ronald. 2013. *Religion without God*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Eck, Diana L. 2002. *A New Religious America*. HarperCollins World.
- Edwards, John D., and Luke Fiedorowicz. n.d. "Social Psychological Foundations of Attitudes about Atheists." *PsycEXTRA Dataset*. doi:10.1037/e521512014-317.
- Epstein, Greg M. 2009. *Good without God: What a Billion Nonreligious People Do Believe*. New York: William Morrow.
- Estabillo, Narissa Grace. 2015. "Impact of Social Media on Pastoral Communication." *Charisma News*. April 30. <http://www.charismanews.com/>.
- "Faith and Facts." n.d. *Thinking about Religion*. doi:10.1057/9781137324757.0012.
- Ferris, Timothy. 2002. *Seeing in the Dark: How Backyard Stargazers Are Probing Deep Space and Guarding Earth from Interplanetary Peril*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Fowler, Jeaneane D. 1999. *Humanism: Beliefs and Practices*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.
- Friedman, Edwin H., Margaret M. Treadwell, and Edward W. Beal. 2007. *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*. New York: Seabury Books.
- Fuller, Millard. 1994. *The Theology of the Hammer*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys.
- Garcia, Alfredo, and Joseph Blankholm. 2016. "The Social Context of Organized Nonbelief: County-Level Predictors of Nonbeliever Organizations in the United States." *JOURNAL FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55 (1): 70–90. doi:10.1111/jssr.12250.
- Gardner, Howard. 1996. *Leading Minds: an Anatomy of Leadership*. London: HaperCollins.
- Garfinkel, Renee, and Kerry Zymelman. 2004. *What Works?: Evaluating Interfaith Dialogue Programs*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.
- George, Bill, and Peter Sims. 2007. *True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/John Wiley & Sons.
- Godbey, John. 1996. *Unitarian Universalist History*. Chicago: Meadville/Lombard Theological School.
- Grayling, A. C. 2013. *The God Argument: the Case against Religion and for Humanism*.
- Greenebaum, Steven. 2012. *The Interfaith Alternative: Embracing Spiritual Diversity*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Pub.

- Greenebaum, Steven. 2014. *Practical Interfaith: How to Find Our Common Humanity as We Celebrate Diversity*.
- Grefe, Dagmar. 2011. *Encounters for Change: Interreligious Cooperation in the Care of Individuals and Communities*. Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock Publishers.
- “Greg Harder and Mastery of Interfaith Social Media.” 2014. *The Interfaith Observer*.  
<http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/>.
- Griffin, David Ray. 2005. *Deep Religious Pluralism*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Gunn, T. Jeremy, and John Witte. 2012. *No Establishment of Religion: America's Original Contribution to Religious Liberty*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haidt, Jonathan. 2012. *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Harris, Sam. 2012. *Free Will*. New York: Free Press.
- Heath, Chip, and Dan Heath. 2010. *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*. New York: Broadway Books.
- Hecht, Jennifer Michael. 2003. *Doubt: a History: the Great Doubters and Their Legacy of Innovation, from Socrates and Jesus to Thomas Jefferson and Emily Dickinson*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Heckman, Bud, and Rori Picker Neiss. 2008. *InterActive Faith: the Essential Interreligious Community-Building Handbook*. Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Pub.
- Heifetz, Ronald A. 1994. *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. Harvard University Press.
- Heifetz, Ronald A., Alexander Grashow, and Martin Linsky. 2009. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.
- Heschel, Abraham Joshua, Harold Kasimow, and Byron L. Sherwin. 1991. *No Religion Is an Island: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Interreligious Dialogue*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Hick, John. 1995. *The Rainbow of Faiths: Critical Dialogues on Religious Pluralism*. London: SCM Press.
- Hanh, Nhat. 2007. *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. England: Riverhead Books.



- Hosseinadeh, Afsaneh. 2011. "The Role of Social Media in Religion." *Academia.edu*, October.
- "How Do We Include the NonReligious in Interfaith Dialogue." 2014. *Religious Reader*. December 10. <http://religiousreader.org/>.
- Howe, Charles A. 1997. *For Faith and Freedom: a Short History of Unitarianism in Europe*. Boston: Skinner House Books.
- "The Humanist Institute | We Explore Humanist Values and Train Future Leaders." 2016. *The Humanist Institute*. Accessed May 17. <http://humanistinstitute.org/>.
- Idliby, Ranya, Suzanne Oliver, and Priscilla Warner. 2007. *The Faith Club: a Muslim, a Christian, a Jew-- Three Women Search for Understanding*. New York: Free Press.
- Idliby, Ranya, Suzanne Oliver, and Priscilla Warner. 2007. *The Faith Club: a Muslim, a Christian, a Jew-- Three Women Search for Understanding*. New York: Free Press.
- "The Interfaith Amigos." 2016. *The Interfaith Amigos*. Accessed November 10. <http://interfaithamigos.com/home.html>.
- "Interfaith Engagement." n.d. *Claremont Lincoln University*. <https://www.claremontlincoln.edu/>.
- "The Interfaith Observer." 2016. *The Interfaith Observer*. Accessed May 17. <http://theinterfaithobserver.org/>.
- "Interfaith Family." 2016. *InterfaithFamily*. Accessed May 17. <http://www.interfaithfamily.com/>.
- Isaacson, Walter. 2003. *Benjamin Franklin: an American Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Jacoby, Susan. 2004. *Freethinkers: a History of American Secularism*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- James, William. 1936. *The Varieties of Religious Experience: a Study in Human Nature*. New York: Modern library.
- Jones, Robert P. 2017. *End of White Christian America*. S.I.: Simon & Schuster.
- Kauffman, Stuart A. 2008. *Reinventing the Sacred: a New View of Science, Reason and Religion*. New York: Basic Books.

- Kawasaki, Guy, and Peg Fitzpatrick. 2014. *The Art of Social Media: Power Tips for Power Users*. New York: Portfolio.
- Kelley, Tom, and Jonathan Littman. 2005. *The Ten Faces of Innovation: IDEO's Strategies for Beating the Devil's Advocate & Driving Creativity throughout Your Organization*. New York: Currency/Doubleday.
- Kerpen, Dave. 2015. *Likeable Social Media: How to Delight Your Customers, Create an Irresistible Brand, and Be Amazing on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, and More*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Klass, Michael W. Geoghegan Dan. 2008. *Podcast Solutions*. Apress.
- Knitter, Paul F. 1995. *One Earth, Many Religions: Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Knitter, Paul F. 2009. *Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- Krattenmaker, Tom. 2016. "Religious 'Nones' Become Something." *Oregon Faith Report* RSS. June 3. <http://oregonfaithreport.com/2016/06/religious-nones-become-something/>.
- Kraut, Robert E., Paul Resnick, and Sara Kiesler. 2011. *Building Successful Online Communities: Evidence-Based Social Design*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kurtz, Paul. 1973. *The Humanist Alternative: Some Definitions of Humanism*. London: Pemberton.
- Kwok, Pui-lan. 2012. *Globalization, Gender, and Peacebuilding: the Future of Interfaith Dialogue*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Lamont, Corliss. 1997. *The Philosophy of Humanism*. Amherst, NY: Humanist Press.
- Landau, Richard M. 2001. *What the World Needs to Know about Interfaith Dialogue: Everything You Need to Know about Working in Harmony with People of Other Faiths*.
- Lindsey, Jen. 2015. "What's 'Religious' About Interreligious Dialogue?" *State of Formation*. August 18. <http://www.stateofformation.org/>.
- Livermore, David A. 2009. *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Livingston, Geoff. 2010. "5 Tips for Creating Non-Profit Online Communities ." *Mashable*. February 12. <http://mashable.com/>

- Lovejoy, Kristen, and Gregory D. Saxton. 2012. "Information, Community, and Action: How Nonprofit Organizations Use Social Media\*." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 17 (3): 337–53. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01576.x.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair C. 2011. *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Mackenzie, Don, Ted Falcon, and Jamal Rahman. 2009. *Getting to the Heart of Interfaith: the Eye-Opening, Hope-Filled Friendship of a Pastor, a Rabbi & a Sheikh*. Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Pub.
- Mackenzie, Don, Ted Falcon, and Jamal Rahman. 2011. *Religion Gone Astray: What We Found at the Heart of Interfaith*. Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Pub.
- McCarthy, Kate. 2007. *Interfaith Encounters in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- McGraw, Barbara A., and Jo Renee Formicola. 2005. *Taking Religious Pluralism Seriously: Spiritual Politics on America's Sacred Ground*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.
- McLaren, Brian D. 2012. *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road?: Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World*. New York: Jericho Books.
- Mehta, Hemant. 2007. *I Sold My Soul on eBay: Viewing Faith through an Atheist's Eyes*. Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press.
- Mehta, Hemant. n.d. "Friendly Atheist." Web log. *Patheos*.  
<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2014/12/05/there-are-humanists-in-ferguson-the-humanist-social-justice-tradition/>.
- Merritt, Carol Howard. 2010. *Reframing Hope: Vital Ministry in a New Generation*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute.
- Miller, Susan Katz. 2013. *Being Both: Embracing Two Religions in One Interfaith Family*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Morain, Lloyd, and Mary S. Morain. 1998. *Humanism as the next Step*. Amherst, NY: Humanist Press.
- Nagel, Thomas. 1987. *What Does It All Mean?: a Very Short Introduction to Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nelefeldmann. 2012. "Interfaith Social Media." *World Faith*. April 12.  
<http://worldfaith.org/>

- Neufeldt, Reina C. 2011. "Interfaith Dialogue: Assessing Theories of Change." *Peace & Change* 36 (3): 344-72. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0130.2011.00702.x.
- Newberg, Andrew B., and Mark Robert. Waldman. 2006. *Why We Believe What We Believe: Uncovering Our Biological Need for Meaning, Spirituality, and Truth*. New York: Free Press.
- Niebuhr, Gustav. 2008. *Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America*. New York: Viking.
- Niose, David. 2012. *Nonbeliever Nation: the Rise of Secular Americans*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Niose, David. 2013. "Secularism and Social Justice." *Psychology Today*, November 13.
- Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2004. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Odden, Lee. 2012. *Optimize: How to Attract and Engage More Customers by Integrating SEO, Social Media, and Content Marketing*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Olds, Wesley Mason. 1973. *Three Pioneers of Religious Humanism; a Study of 'Religion without God' in the Thought of John H. Dietrich, Curtis W. Reese, and Charles Francis Potter*.
- "Open Culture - The Best Free Cultural and Educational Media on the Web." 2016. *Open Culture*. Accessed May 17. <http://www.openculture.com/>.
- Osborne, Larry W. 2008. *Sticky Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Papacharissi, Zizi. 2011. *A Networked Self: Identity, Community and Culture on Social Network Sites*. New York: Routledge.
- Parker, Rebecca Ann., and Robert Hardies. 2006. *Blessing the World: What Can Save Us Now*. Boston, MA: Skinner House Books.
- Parks, Sharon Daloz. 2005. *Leadership Can Be Taught: a Bold Approach for a Complex World*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- "Parliament of the World's Religions | Parliament of the World's Religions." 2016. *Parliament of the World's Religions | Parliament of the World's Religions*. Accessed May 17. <https://parliamentofreligions.org/>.
- Patel, Eboo. 2012. *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- Patel, Eboo, and Patrice Brodeur. 2006. *Building the Interfaith Youth Movement: beyond Dialogue to Action*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Patel, Eboo, and Tim Scorer. 2012. *Embracing Interfaith Cooperation: Eboo Patel on Coming Together to Change the World: a Five-Session Study*. Denver, CO: Morehouse Education Resources.
- Peace, Jennifer Howe., Or N. Rose, and Gregory Mobley. 2012. *My Neighbor's Faith: Stories of Interreligious Encounter, Growth, and Transformation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Pedrotti, Jennifer Teramoto, and Lisa M. Edwards. 2014. *Perspectives on the Intersection of Multiculturalism and Positive Psychology*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Phillips, Katherine. 2014. "How Diversity Makes Us Smarter." *Scientific American*, October 1. [www.scientificamerican.com](http://www.scientificamerican.com)
- Pinker, Steven. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*. New York: Viking.
- Pinn, Anthony B. 2012. *The End of God-Talk: an African American Humanist Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pinn, Anthony B. 2014. *Writing God's Obituary: How a Good Methodist Became a Better Atheist*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Pree, Max De. 1989. *Leadership Is an Art*. New York: Doubleday.
- Prothero, Stephen R. 2007. *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know and Doesn't*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Prothero, Stephen R. 2010. *God Is Not One: the Eight Rival Religions That Run the World--and Why Their Differences Matter*. New York: HarperOne.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2007. *E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-First Century*. Malden, MA.: Blackwell Pub.
- Putnam, Robert D., and David E. Campbell. 2010. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Putnam, Robert D., Lewis M. Feldstein, and Don Cohen. 2004. *Better Together: Restoring the American Community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

- Quindlen, Anna. 2004. *Loud and Clear*. New York: Random House.
- Rawls, John. 1993. *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Reese, Curtis W. 1927. *Humanist Sermons*. Chicago: Open Court Pub. Co.
- Reese, Curtis Williford. n.d. *A Democratic View of Religion*. Yellow Springs, OH: American Humanist Association.
- Roberto, John. 2010. *Faithformation2020: Designing the Future of Faith Formation*. Naugatuck, CT: Lifelong Faith Associates.
- Robinson, Anthony B. 2006. *Leadership for Vital Congregations*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press.
- Rosen, Larry D., Mark L. Carrier, and Nancy A. Cheever. 2010. *Rewired: Understanding the I Generation and the Way They Learn*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sacks, Jonathan. 1991. *Persistence of Faith: Religion, Morality & Society in a Secular Age*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Sacks, Jonathan. 2002. *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*. London: Continuum.
- Safko, Lon, and David K. Brake. 2009. *The Social Media Bible: Tactics, Tools, and Strategies for Business Success*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Santayana, George. 1982. *Reason in Religion*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Schaefer, Mark W. 2014. *Social Media Explained: Untangling the World's Most Misunderstood Business Trend*. United States: Schaefer Marketing Solutions.
- Schulz, William F. 2002. *Making the Manifesto: the Birth of Religious Humanism*. Boston, MA: Skinner House Books.
- "Secularism and Social Justice." 2016. *Take Action!* Accessed May 17.  
<https://www.secular.org/blogs/david-niose/secularism-and-social-justice>.
- Seligman, Martin E. P. 1994. *What You Can Change and What You Can't: the Complete Guide to Successful Self-Improvement*. New York: Knopf.
- Seligman, Martin E. P. 2011. *Flourish: a Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*. New York: Free Press.

- Sellon, Mary K., and Daniel P. Smith. 2005. *Practicing Right Relationship: Skills for Deepening Purpose, Finding Fulfillment, and Increasing Effectiveness in Your Congregation*. Herndon, VA.: Alban Institute.
- Shashoua, Steven. 2012. "Interfaith Needs Atheists." *New Humanist*. July 16. <https://newhumanist.org.uk/>.
- Sherkat, Darren E. n.d. *Changing Faith: the Dynamics and Consequences of Americans' Shifting Religious Identities*.
- Shirky, Clay. 2008. *Here Comes Everybody: the Power of Organizing without Organizations*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Shore, Billy. 2009. "When Social Media and Social Justice Intersect." *Huffington Post*, August 13. [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com).
- Shragge, Eric. 2013. *Activism and Social Change: Lessons for Community Organizing*. North York, Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Simms, Karl. 2003. *Paul Ricoeur*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, Jesse M. 2013. "Creating a Godless Community: The Collective Identity Work of Contemporary American Atheists." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52 (1): 80–99. doi:10.1111/jssr.12009.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. 1998. *Patterns of Faith around the World*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell., and Kenneth Cracknell. 2001. *Wilfred Cantwell Smith: a Reader*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- Solomon, Robert C. 2002. *Spirituality for the Skeptic: the Thoughtful Love of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Speckhardt, Roy. 2015. *Creating Change through Humanism*. Washington, DC: Humanist Press.
- Stedman, Chris. 2012. *Faitheist: How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Stern, Nikki. 2012. *Hope in Small Doses*. Washington, DC: Humanist Press.
- Stout, Jeffrey. 2004. *Democracy and Tradition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- "Sunday Assembly." n.d. *Sunday Assembly*. <http://www.sundayassembly.com/>.

- Thandeka. 1999. *Learning to Be White: Money, Race, and God in America*. New York: Continuum.
- Tillich, Paul. 1958. *Dynamics of Faith*. New York: Harper.
- Tippett, Krista. 2007. *Speaking of Faith*. New York: Viking.
- Turner, James. 1985. *Without God, without Creed: the Origins of Unbelief in America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Uhl, Stephen F. 2007. *Imagine No Superstition: the Power to Enjoy Life with No Guilt, No Shame, No Blame*. Tucson, AZ: Golden Rule Publishing.
- "United Action Connecticut." 2016. : *UACT : Organized Interfaith Communities and Civic Institutions Building a Better Future*. Accessed May 17. <http://uact4justice.org/>.
- "United Coalition of Reason." n.d. *United Coalition of Reason*. <http://unitedcor.org/>.
- "UU Humanists." n.d. *UU Humanists*. <http://huumanists.org/>.
- Vaynerchuk, Gary. 2013. *Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy, Social World*. New York, NY: Harper Business, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.
- Walker, Barbara G. 2007. *Belief & Unbelief*. Washington, D.C.: Humanist Press.
- Walzer, Michael. 1992. *What It Means to Be an American*. New York: Marsilio.
- Warren, Mark R., and Richard L. Wood. 2001. *Faith-Based Community Organizing: the State of the Field: a Report of the Findings of a National Survey Conducted by Interfaith Funders*. Jericho, NY: Interfaith Funders.
- Welch, Sharon. 1999. "Spirituality Without God." *Tikkun*.
- Welch, Timothy. 2008. *Technology Tools for Your Ministry*. New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications.
- Werner, Michael. 2013. *Regaining Balance: the Evolution of the UUA*. Hamden, CT: Religious Humanism Press.
- "What 'Religious' about Interreligious Dialogue?" n.d. *State of Formation*. <http://www.stateofformation.org/>.
- Wine, Sherwin T. 1995. *Staying Sane in a Crazy World*. Birmingham, MI: Center for New Thinking.



- Wink, Walter. 1998. *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*. New York: Doubleday.
- “World's Largest Religion Website Hosts Online Interfaith Experiment.” 2015. *PR Newswire: Press Release Distribution, Targeting, Monitoring and Marketing*. October 12. <http://www.prnewswire.com/>.
- “The World's Newest Religion: No Religion.” 2016. *National Geographic*. Accessed May 17. <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/>.
- Wuthnow, Robert. 2005. *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wuthnow, Robert. 2015. *Inventing American Religion: Polls, Surveys, and the Temious Quest for a Nation's Faith*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yukich, Grace, and Ruth Braunstein. 2014. “Encounters at the Religious Edge: Variation in Religious Expression Across Interfaith Advocacy and Social Movement Settings.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 53 (4): 791–807. doi:10.1111/jssr.12142.
- Zandt, Deanna. 2010. *Share This!: How You Will Change the World with Social Networking*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Zuckerman, Phil, Luke W. Galen, and Frank L. Pasquale. 2016. *The Nonreligious: Understanding Secular People and Societies*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Appendix B  
Pre-Surveys

Humanity Coalition: Survey 1 for Humanists

1. Have you ever worked with an interfaith organization/group on a particular community action project?  
If so, did you do so as an individual Humanist or as part of a Humanist group?  
Where and when?
2. Are you aware of any interfaith organizations/groups in CT? If so, where?
3. Are you aware of any interfaith organizations/groups in CT that include Humanists? If so, where?
4. Have you ever engaged in interfaith dialogue as part of an interfaith organization/group? If so, where and when?
5. Do you think, as a humanist, engaging in collaboration with religious adherents who are open to such collaboration for the sake of community dialogue and action could be positive and productive? Why or why not?
6. What shared values, if any, do you think exist between Humanists and religious adherents?

## Humanity Coalition: Survey 1 for Interfaith Groups

1. Have you ever worked with a Humanist organization/group on a particular community action project?  
If so, did you do it as an individual or as part of a group? Where and when?
2. Are you aware of any Humanist organizations/groups in CT? If so, where?
3. Are you aware of any interfaith organizations/groups in CT that include Humanists? If so, where?
4. Have you ever engaged in interfaith dialogue with Humanists (atheists, non-religious, etc.)? If so, where and when?
5. Do you think, as a religious adherent, engaging in collaboration with Humanists who are open to such collaboration for the sake of community dialogue and action could be positive and productive? If not, why not?
6. What shared values, if any, do you think exist between Humanists and religious adherents?

Appendix C  
Post-Survey

Humanity Coalition - Survey 2 for Humanists

1. Do you feel you've gained any new information on the concept of interfaith engagement or interfaith organizations/groups in CT? If so, please explain.
2. Would you be willing, as an individual, to work with religious adherents in interfaith community action? If not, why not?
3. Have your thoughts on shared values that exist between religious adherents who engage in interfaith action and Humanists who are willing to engage in the same changed at all or expanded in any way? Explain.
4. What is one particular community action project that you feel would benefit from a collaboration between Humanists and religious adherents?

If you would be willing to participate in possible further research, or offer feedback on this project, please print your name and email address or phone number:

Thank you  
Kathleen A. Green, Doctoral Candidate

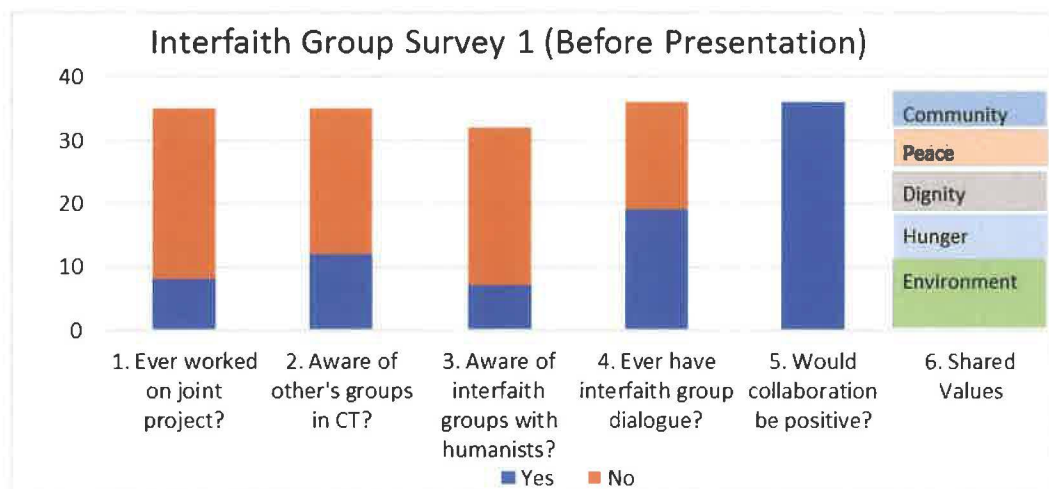
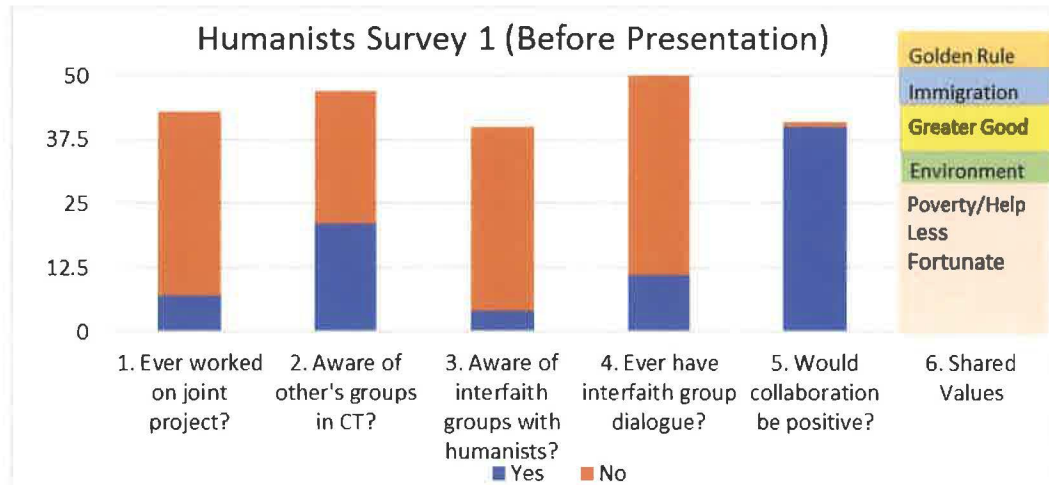
## Humanity Coalition - Survey 2 for Interfaith Groups

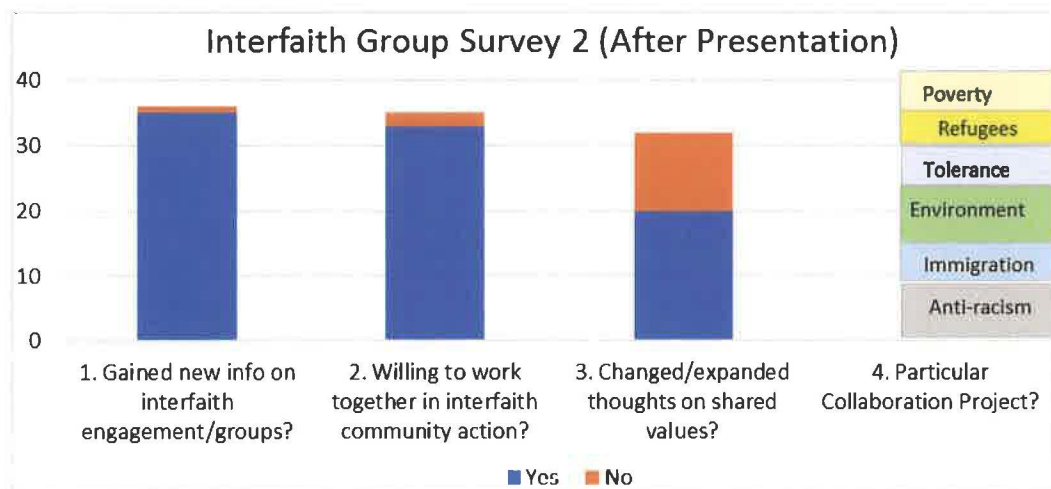
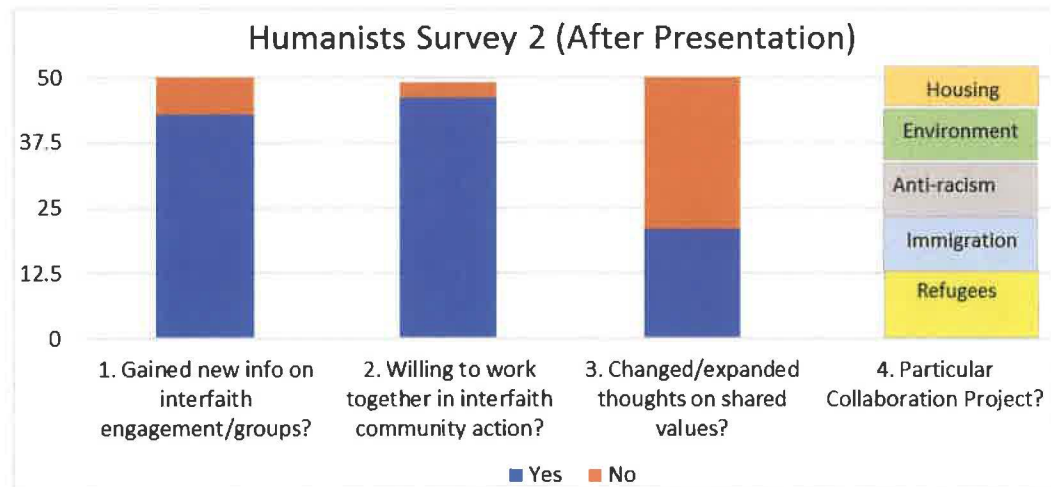
1. Do you feel you've gained any new information on the concept of Humanism or Humanism organizations/groups in CT? If so, please explain.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Would you be willing, as an individual, to work with Humanists in interfaith community action? If not, why not?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Have your thoughts on shared values that exist between religious adherents who engage in interfaith action and Humanists who are willing to engage in the same changed at all or expanded in any way? Explain.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What is one particular community action project that you feel would benefit from a collaboration between Humanists and religious adherents?

If you would be willing to participate in possible further research, or offer feedback on this project, please print your name and email address or phone number:

Thank you  
Kathleen A. Green, Doctoral Candidate

## Appendix D Survey Data Chart





Appendix E  
Collaboration Vision Initiative

## Collaboration Vision Initiative for the Humanity Coalition Project

### Purpose of the Humanity Coalition Project:

*Establish an inclusively collective voice for the flourishing of humanity and human rights by bringing interfaith and humanist communities together to collaborate on local social justice issues.*

With so much divisiveness in society, along with a tremendous need for attention to social justice issues that impact all of our lives, coming together with a focus on shared values is paramount. Too often good intentions and stalwart efforts by individual interfaith, religious, or Humanist groups become isolated and have limited impact. Combining efforts and collaborating on projects that better the wider community can make a significant difference in the lives of both those who give and those who receive.

It's through shared values that people can unite and find motivation to address the urgent needs of the community. Indeed, regardless of religious affiliation, we are all connected by our humanity.

### Agreement of Right Relations:

The term 'right relations' refers to a healthy and thoughtful way of being in community with one another. An agreement of right relations seeks to help create an atmosphere of respect, trust, compassion, and gratitude. It is a set of guidelines whose purpose is served through respectful communication when engaging in dialogue and action, and is meant to help reduce the risk of misunderstanding, hurt, and conflict that can occur when people speak passionately about subjects important to them. To this end all people involved in The Humanity Coalition Project recognize and agree to abide by an agreement of right relations.

Participants in the Humanity Coalition Project agree to...

- ❖ Engage with other participants and the collaborative work on issues with compassion and commitment
- ❖ Refrain from proselytizing
- ❖ Listen deeply with full attention; assume good intentions
- ❖ Regard other participants as colleagues or teammates
- ❖ Focus on the message not the messenger; critiquing ideas and not people
- ❖ Seek and provide clarification about expectations
- ❖ Speak, insofar as possible, from personal experience, rather than presenting theories or generalizations, and while considering before speaking whether there is an urgent need for others to hear what is about to be said, also consider if others are likely to mistake what is about to be said for a political statement, lecture, or personal announcement.



### General guidelines for the project

1. The first task is to assess interest and knowledge in local humanist and interfaith groups. Taking the time to reach out to individual groups and conduct a brief educational engagement assessment is crucial to the success of the project and any future collaboration. The assessment is explained further in this Initiative as the Exploration Plan.
2. Having working definitions of Humanism and Interfaith are necessary before implementing the Exploration Plan. The idea of having “working” definitions allows for participants to consider the project with a common understanding. The definitions presented are not to be taken as the *only* definitions or the *right* definitions, rather they are definitions used specifically for the purposes of the project. The definitions used are as follows:

**Humanism** (adapted from the British Humanist Association) - Putting human beings and all living things at the center of your moral outlook while looking to science and reason to make sense of the world, and supporting human flourishing and human rights for everyone.

**Interfaith** (adapted from Eboo Patel’s book *Interfaith Leadership*) - A relationship between people who orient around faith and religion differently, with faith being the personal relationship an individual has with a religious or philosophical tradition.

3. Present the Agreement of Right Relationship to all participants.
4. Emphasize and lead with values as opposed to beliefs. You will see this in the Exploration presentation.
5. Let the project progress organically. This is not about establishing another 501(C)3 organization! The Humanity Coalition Project is about engaged collaboration that comes out of the needs and desires of the wider community. Being aware of the most pressing local social justice issues is a good way to narrow the focus of engagement.
6. Be open to feedback from participants, civic leaders, etc. Always in all ways!
7. Utilize technology. This will increase the participant potential by, in some cases, broadening accessibility and creating appeal to younger individuals and busy parents who might otherwise be unable to participate. Examples of useful technology are Facebook live video and Zoom video meetings. Setting an intention for the gathering and presenting an agreement of right relations is important in online/virtual meetings too!
8. Give thoughtful consideration to project leadership. Ideally a shared leadership model that utilizes the voice and skills from each demographic represented is preferred. If not, find someone who has already established strong relationships in both humanist and interfaith organizations and understands the culture of both groups.

#### Exploration Plan:

1. Presentation logistics
  - a. Reach out by making connections with active/vibrant groups (read more than 6 or 8 members, regularly scheduled meetings or events, and some track record of wider community engagement) and schedule a presentation.

- b. Presentations can be done in person and/or online. In person meetings typically offer better opportunity for a question and answer period, although if a webinar or video chat format is used, the online option is just as good.
- c. Doing the presentation during an organization's regularly scheduled meeting is ideal but not often doable without several months' notice as most organizations have their meetings planned well in advance. Needless to say, getting people to come out for another meeting can be difficult. Here's where food bribery comes in! Offer a light lunch, coffee hour, or tea time when the most convenient meeting time is during the day. After all, people have to eat. Simple is best and if you are comfortable doing so, you can ask the hosting location to help by providing beverages or paper goods. Yes, this is an overhead cost but it's not difficult to find a couple of other people who are enthusiastic about the project and willing to help with defraying the costs involved.
- d. Plan a 15 minute visual presentation, 5 minutes each for a pre-presentation survey and post-presentation survey, 10-15 minutes for questions at the very end, and time to get everyone seated (with food if applicable) at the start. Everyone's time is valuable and adhering to the expected schedule is paramount in establishing trust and furthering a desire to work together in the future. And don't forget to ensure enough time for more introverted participants to add to the discussion or offer questions. To this point it may be helpful to collect contact information from participants willing to discuss their presentation experience at a later date.

## II. Presentation details:

Be sure to include information about yourself, as the presenter, that clearly demonstrates your passion for the project and your connection with humanism and/or interfaith communities. Survey samples, and power point slide samples are available upon request to use as a template. You will want to be sure to research and prepare data from your local area in order to educate participants on currently existing groups and issues. The local focus is crucial as otherwise the process and project can feel overwhelming.

After the presentations have been made and data collected you can assess from your presentation experience and the surveys the level of interest in collaboration. Now it's time to consider next steps!

Consider a variety of opportunities for next-step actions and seek input from leaders of the humanist and interfaith organizations willing to be a part of the Humanity Coalition Project. Some ideas might include:

- a. Regional/local meeting (quarterly or annually) to set up action issue task forces to lead efforts.
- b. Annual statewide issues conference to learn about current local issues and connect with one another by sharing successes and challenges


- c. Individual groups focused on a current issue, or with a history of working on an issue, invite other groups to join in the work and assist with leadership.
- d. Take information from the surveys to determine a social justice issue where shared values between groups exists and plan a one-and-done activity where all are invited to participate and leadership for the activity planning is shared.

Remember to always have representatives from both humanist and interfaith groups involved in leadership and action. Consider ways to work together to bring in new voices and all ages and be mindful of accessibility (language, ability, etc.).

Whatever next steps you choose, be sure to utilize every communication venue possible to get the word out. This may mean getting another person, or two, to help with communication. You might be great with Facebook but have no clue about Twitter. Or your idea of social media is limited to email. Either way, get some help to get the word out. A mailer or phone call just won't do it.

Lastly, but very important, is to provide resources for further exploration of humanism and interfaith engagement. A simple resource list that can be distributed through the participating groups is a great idea. Ask organizational leaders to suggest resources for the list and be sure to include website, blogs, and videos.

Appendix F  
Webinar Invitation



**Friends,  
Thank you again for  
participating in the research for  
my doctorate project. As a  
culmination and celebration of  
this work, I am hosting a  
webinar on Oct. 23rd, at 8pm  
(EST) and you are invited! The  
Zoom link and details will arrive  
via email 48 hours prior to the  
event.**

**Please extend this invitation to  
those in your group who also  
participated in the research, as  
well as those you think would  
be interested in the project.**

**Look forward to seeing you  
online!**

**With gratitude and warm  
regards,**

**Kathleen**

## Religious Freedom—It Cuts Both Ways

Rev. Kathleen Green  
April 3, 2017

**Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.**

There it is – the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Contained in that text is the cherished principle of religious freedom: the right to religious belief or no religious belief, *and* protection from governmental preference of one religion over another, or over non-religion.

To know the history of this country is to know that the founders were clearly concerned about the role of religion in our government. I can't help but wonder just how many of our elected officials know that President Thomas Jefferson refused to proclaim holidays based on religion, because he believed this would violate religious freedom? It is true that the Founding Fathers were religious, but it is also true that they were very intentional in establishing a government that was secular.

**We cannot allow claims of religious freedom to be used as a tool of discrimination and inequality.**

How many of us are aware of the fact that John Quincy Adams was sworn in as President of the United States in 1825, using a book of law and not the bible because he wanted to display a separation of church and state? Yes, the founders of this nation believed that establishment of a secular government is the best way to both support religion and protect religious freedom.

As Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch is in the throes of hearing confirmations, my recurring nightmare of the 2014 SCOTUS decision in favor of Hobby Lobby haunts me once again. One year earlier in the 10<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals, even while the government argued that for-profit corporations should not have the protections of non-profit religious organizations, Gorsuch agreed with the for-profit secular corporation that claimed it had religious freedom and should not be required to provide contraceptive coverage as part of its employer-sponsored health insurance plans. We cannot allow claims of religious freedom to be used as a tool of discrimination and inequality. It was



Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who said of the church, “It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool.”

## **This is not about partisan politics. This is about humanity.**

While today we don’t face the threat of an established church, as someone who holds a minority religious identity in the United States (ordained in the Unitarian Universalist tradition, and as an atheist), I am keenly aware that what we do face is **an ongoing struggle with those who treat freedom of religion as an opportunity to impose their religious beliefs on others.** We must never forget that religious freedom was used to justify slavery, support segregation and Jim Crow laws, and condone racial and gender discrimination. In very recent history, we’ve seen religious freedom being used as a tool against employees who choose in vitro fertilization, and against LGBT individuals.

Too many political leaders seem to ignore the fact that religious freedom promises protection from governmental preference of religion in general, and preference of any particular faith. This is not about partisan politics. This is about humanity. This is about *all* of humanity, not just those who look a certain way, or speak a certain way, or worship a certain way. **The truth is, religious freedom has never been just about Christianity. Many others are also protected by the principle of religious freedom: Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Buddhists, Humanists, and more.**

At this moment in the life of our country, it is imperative that local and national interfaith groups seek to include minority religious voices in their ranks and commit to the critical work of making sure that the government doesn’t play religious favorites and never regulates private life based on religious beliefs. The future of religious freedom for *all*, and the destiny of our nation, is at stake.

## Bibliography

- American Humanist Association. "A Humanist Manifesto (1933)." <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto1> (accessed April 15, 2016).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Humanist Manifesto II (1973)." <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto2/> (accessed April 15, 2016).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Humanist Manifesto III (2003)." <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto3/> (accessed April 15, 2016).
- Arizona Interfaith Movement. "Faith Traditions." <http://www.interfaithmovement.com/> (accessed September 9, 2017).
- Baab, Lynne M. *Friending: Real Relationships in a Virtual World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2011.
- Bowden, Peter. "5 Ways Social Media is Changing How People Join Congregations." *Leading Congregations*, March 9, 2017. <http://leadingcongregations.com/2017/03/09/5-ways-social-media-is-changing-how-people-join-congregations/> (accessed June 1, 2017).
- Campbell, Heidi A., ed. *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Chaffee, Paul. "Who Isn't at the Table?" *The Interfaith Observer*, April 15, 2013. <http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/journal-articles/2013/4/15/who-isnt-at-the-table.html> (accessed January 23, 2018).
- Cimino, Richard, and Christopher Smith. *Atheist Awakening: Secular Activism & Community In America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Commission on Appraisal Unitarian Universalist Association. *Engaging Our Theological Diversity: A Report by the Commission on Appraisal*. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005.
- Cox, Daniel, and Robert P. Jones. "America's Changing Religious Identity," <http://www.prrri.org/research/american-religious-landscape-christian-religiously-unaffiliated/> (accessed September 9, 2017).
- Cragun, Ryan T., Christel Manning, and Lori L. Fazzino, eds. *Organized Secularism in the United States: New Directions in Research*. Berlin: De Gruyter Publishing, 2017.

- de Botton, Alain. *Religion for Atheists: A Non-Believer's Guide to the Uses of Religion*. New York: Vintage Books, 2012.
- Eck, Diana L. "What is Pluralism?" *The Pluralism Project*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2006. <http://pluralism.org/what-is-pluralism> (accessed September 10, 2017).
- Ġalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. *The Essential Rumi*. Edited by Coleman Barks. Translated by Coleman Barks and John Moyne. New York: Harper Collins, 1995.
- Green, Emma. "How Will Young People Choose Their Religion?" *The Atlantic*, March 20, 2016. <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/03/how-will-young-people-choose-their-religion/474366/>.
- Green, Kathleen. "The Missing Link: Humanists at the Parliament of World Religions." *The Humanist*, November 2, 2015. <https://thehumanist.com/commentary/the-missing-link-humanists-at-the-parliament-of-world-religions>.
- Griffin, David Ray. *Process Theology: On Postmodernism, Morality, Pluralism, Eschatology, and Demonic Evil*. Anoka, MN: Process Century Press, 2017.
- Hedges, Paul. *Towards Better Disagreement: Religions and Atheism in Dialogue*. London: Jessica Kingsley, 2017.
- Interfaith Alliance. "How We Make a Difference." <https://interfaithalliance.org/about-us/> (accessed November 10, 2016).
- International Humanist and Ethical Union. *Freedom of Thought 2017: A Global Report on the Rights, Legal Statue and Discrimination Against Humanist, Atheists and the Non-religious*. Key Countries Edition, 2017. <http://freethoughtreport.com/download-the-report>.
- Jones, Michael W. "Humanist Manifesto III: A Review." *The Eloquent Atheist*, July 26, 2012. <http://www.eloquentatheist.com/2012/07/humanist-manifesto-iii-a-review/> (accessed April 14, 2016).
- Jones, Robert P., and Daniel Cox. "America's Changing Religious Identity: Findings from the 2016 American Values Atlas." Public Religion Research Institute, September 6, 2017. <https://www.prrri.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/PRRI-Religion-Report.pdf> (accessed September 9, 2017).
- Juris, Jeffrey S. "Reflections on #Occupy Everywhere: Social Media, Public Space, and Emerging Logics of Aggregation." *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 2 (May 2012): 259-279.
- Kenny, Graham. "Your Company's Purpose is not Its Vision, Mission, or Values." *Harvard Business Review*, September 3, 2014. <https://hbr.org/2014/09/your-company-purpose-is-not-its-vision-mission-or-values>.



Kierkegaard, Soren. *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life*. Edited by Victor Eremita New York: Penguin, 1992.

Krattenmaker, Tom. *Confessions of a Secular Jesus Follower: Finding Answers In Jesus For Those Who Don't Believe*. New York: Convergent Books, 2016.

Lieberman, Matthew D. *Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect*. New York: Crown, 2013.

Mann, Alice. *Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

Mayhew, Matthew J., Alyssa N. Rockenbach, Benjamin P. Correia, Rebecca E. Crandall, and Marc A. Lo. "Emerging Interfaith Trends What College Students Are Saying About Religion in 2016."  
<https://www.ifyc.org/sites/default/files/Final%20Emerging%20Trends%20Report.pdf> (accessed September 9 2017).

McNeal, Rachael. "Creating a Culture of Interfaith Cooperation." *The Huffington Post*, April 27, 2013. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rachael-mcneal/creating-a-culture-of-unity-through-interfaith-cooperation\\_b\\_3167765.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rachael-mcneal/creating-a-culture-of-unity-through-interfaith-cooperation_b_3167765.html) (accessed May 20, 2017).

Mehta, Hemant. "This Major Interfaith Organization Now Includes More Non-Theists Than Ever Before." *The Friendly Atheist*, January 1, 2014,  
<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2014/01/01/this-major-interfaith-organization-now-includes-more-non-theists-than-ever-before/> (accessed July 10, 2017).

Miller, Greg. "Why Loneliness Is Hazardous To Your Health." *Science Magazine*, January 14, 2011. <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/331/6014/news-summaries>, 138-140.

Miller, Merrill. "AHA Launches Initiatives for Racial Justice, Women's Equality and LGBTQ Rights." <https://americanhumanist.org/press-releases/2016-05-humanist-group-launches-initiatives-for-racial-justi/> (accessed June 1, 2017).

Murry, William R. *Becoming More Fully Human: Religious Humanism As A Way Of Life*. New Haven, CT: Religious Humanism Press, 2011.

Patel, Eboo. *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2016.

Pew Center Research. "Religious Landscape Study." <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/connecticut/>.

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. "'Nones' on the Rise: One-in-Five Adults Have No Religious Affiliation." Pew Research Center, October 9, 2012.  
<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise>.

- Pew Research Center Internet & Technology. "Social Media Fact Sheet."  
<http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media/> (accessed January 25, 2018).
- Radoff, Jon. *Game On: Energize Your Business with Social Media Games*. Indianapolis: Wiley, 2011.
- Sellon, Mary, and Dan Smith. *Practicing Right Relationship: Skills for Deepening Purpose, Finding Fulfillment, and Increasing Effectiveness in Your Congregation*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2005.
- Stanley, Andy. *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012. Kindle Electronic Edition.
- Torma, Ryan, and Paul Emerson Teusner. "iReligion." *Studies in World Christianity* 17, no. 2 (August 2011): 137-155. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/swc.2011.0017>.
- UN General Assembly. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights."  
<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> (accessed August 6, 2017).
- Unitarian Universalist Association. "Covenant of Right Relations."  
<http://www.uua.org/safe/covenant> (accessed October 22, 2017).
- Wilson, Edwin H. *Genesis of a Humanist Manifesto*. Amherst, NY: Humanist Press, 1995.
- World Faiths Development Dialogue. *Interfaith Journeys: An Exploration of History, Ideas, and Future Directions*. Washington, DC: World Faiths Development Dialogue, 2017. <https://s3.amazonaws.com/berkley-center/170201WFDDInterfaithJourneysExplorationHistoryIdeasFutureDirections.pdf>.
- Xaverian Missionaries USA. "Religious and NonReligious Dialogue."  
<https://www.xaverianmissionaries.org/religious-secular-dialogue/> (accessed October 11, 2017).
- Zindler, Frank. "Ethics Without Gods." *American Atheists*.  
<https://www.atheists.org/activism/resources/ethics-without-gods/> (accessed April 14, 2016).